PlayStation®2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

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No One Lives Forever
Colin McRae 3
Sled Storm
Elite Force
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ICO

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ISSUE 01 APRIL 2002

DERWENT HOWARD

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LIVE LIFE
To The
MAXIMO.

PlayStation 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

ON THE COVER
The game that presumes to steal Tekken's thunder.

PlayStation.2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

EDITOR S LETTER

Welcome to the first issue of a bigger, bolder and more action-packed Official PlayStation 2 magazine! There have been some major changes around here recently and you're holding the result: a mag that's bursting at the seams with PlayStation goodness and, in this very special boxed edition, packed in with loads of cool freebies in the form of stickers, money-off vouchers and loads of other good stuff. And let's not forget the DVD - this baby is full of exclusive PlayStation content, available in Australia ONLY to readers of the Official magazine.

Of course, it's a brave new world out there now. Because by the time you read this column, there'll be a new prentender to the home entertainment crown, in the shape of Microsoft's Xbox console. This is a fight PlayStation 2 is best prepared for,, with a massive, unrivaled library of quality software and a huge installed base of fiercely proud PS2 owners. Walk into any games store in the country and there's a fantastic game to suit any taste just waiting there for you, and that's a claim that the competition won't be able to make for quite a while. And with the new 'entertainment package' offer from Sony (you'll no doubt have seen the ads on TV already), there's no betrer time to get on board if you've been waiting to make the jump from PS One.

At *OPS2*, we welcome the competition because we know it's all about the games - and our machine has been playing host to some of the best gaming experiences imaginable. With gems such as *GT3*, *Herdy Gerdy* , *MGS2*, *ICO* and *GTA3* on store shelves right now and stuff like *VF4*, *Spiderman: The Movie* and *V8 Supercars* in the pipeline, the good times are going to keep on rolling.

MAX EVERINGHAM
Editor

This is a fight PlayStation 2 is best prepared for

ICO™

PAL

PLAYABLE
MIKE TYSON BOXING™
ICO™
VAMPIRE NIGHT™

VIDEO
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4™
STAR WARS RACER™
DARK SUMMIT™
SHADOWMAN™

EXTRAS
The making of WRC
FFX (movie)

PLATINUM
PLAYABLE DOA2
Tekken Tag Tournament™
GT3™
F1200™

G GENERAL

ON THE DVD

PLAYABLE DEMOS

OTHER MAGAZINES LET YOU WATCH, *OPS2* LETS YOU PLAY…

I t s both a compliment and a pleasure that *OPS2* is able to bring you an exclusive DVD for your PlayStation 2 every single month! You won t find a DVD disc up to the quality of ours anywhere else, and you certainly won t find playable demos on any other locally-produced magazine. *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* is *the* place to help you make your gaming choices, and what better way to do so than to read our reviews and then be able to try before you buy ?!

This month we have pieced together another jam-packed DVD. Check out our playable demos of *Mike Tyson s Heavyweight Boxing* from Codemasters, *Ico* which we believe is set to become one of the strongest adventure games around and finally, *Vampire Night,* the long-awaited shooter from Namco and Sega.

New videos this month include the superb-looking beat em up *Virtua Fighter 4,* LucasArts *Star Wars Racer Revenge, Dark Summit* and *Shadowman 2* from Acclaim.

To round it out, we also have for the first time, playapable demos from Platinum successes *Gran Turismo 3, F1 2001, Tekken Tag Tournament* and *Dead or Alive 2!* Be sure to check out the new-to-*OPS2* footage of *Final Fantasy X* and the Making Of video surrounding *World Rally Championship* as well. All the latest from Planet PlayStation on one disc!

Keep moving. The future looks bright.

Richie Young

Richie Young
Deputy Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the ↓ and ↑ keys. To choose within a section use ← and →. Press ⊗ to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

VAMPIRE NIGHT

PUBLISHER: SONY / GAME TYPE: SHOOTER / OUT: 3 MAY / PLAYERS: 1 - 2

THE GAME

Reviewed in this very issue, *Vampire Night* is the long-awaited joint project between Japanese gaming giants Namco and Sega. It is unofficially regarded as the sequel to the arcade smash *House of the Dead.*

THE DEMO

OPS2 s exclusive *Vampire Night* demo sees you playing through two select excerpts from Chapters One and Two of the full game. The demo has been set to the Easy setting, allowing you to get in plenty of target practise on the fanged fiends! Play through this demo on subsequent occasions, trying to take out your opponents quicker each time. You ll see that depending on your accuracy success, slightly different paths may be taken!

PLAY DEMO ONE

THE CONTROLS
Vampire Night is best used with a Namco G-Con 2 however, it can also be played using a standard Dual Shock controller.

L-stick - Move crosshair
⊗   Shoot
△   Reload
⊡   Attack
L1   Re-centre crosshair

EXTRAS

THE MAKING OF WRC

Ever wanted to know how videogames are made anyway? *OPS2* takes you inside a Evolution s games studio for a sneak peek.

FINAL FANTASY X THE MOVIE

Even if you re not a fan of RPG s, you will definitely appreciate this game. Just whack our exclusive video on to see what we mean!

PLUS PLATINUM PLAYABLE:

Tekken Tag Tournament"
Dead or Alive 2"
Gran Turismo 3"
Formula 1 2001 "

DEMO MOVIES

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4
Check out our massive preview and see for yourself how sweet this beat em up is looking!

STAR WARS RACER REVENGE
The original N64 blew the socks off a lot of people and we ve seen strong evidence that it has improved in every conceivable way for its PS2 debut.

DARK SUMMIT
Ubisoft s RPG has been a long time in the making. The video shows how much RPG graphics have improved with the PS2!

SHADOWMAN
The sequel to Acclaim s semi-hit from 1999 gets a boost in graphics. Nice video lads!

PLAY DEMO TWO

THE CONTROLS
Holding down the ⬜ modifier will allow you to access the second punch available while selecting each of the various punch buttons.

L-stick - Move Mike
ⓧ   Upercut
ⓐ   Jab
ⓞ   Right Cross/body
◎   Left Cross/body
⬜   Dodge Right
⬜   Dodge Left
⬜   Combo initiate
⬜   Modifier
▣   Taunt

MIKE TYSON BOXING
Publisher: Codemasters / Game type: Boxing / Out: May / Players: 1 - 2

THE GAME
Games like TOCA, Micro Maniacs and Colin McRae Rally have made Codemasters more famous for their racing games, but they ve also dabbled in capturing pugilists for the entertainment of game fans before. Remember the original game made for the PSone? Or perhaps you saw Prince Naseem Boxing? Surprise surprise! This latest beat em up is brought to you by the same team.

THE DEMO
What you ll immediately notice in this demo is Iron Mike looks much better and the Codies team has taken significant steps to improve on what was seen in their original efforts. It has a far more arcade feel to it, and it sits somewhere in between Ready 2 Rumble and the Knockout Kings from EA Sports. And make sure you check out the bug fella s tattoo! Take the OPS2 challenge and try and KO New Zealand s David Tua inside of the first round! If you can t beat em, eat em...

PLAY DEMO THREE

THE CONTROLS
L-stick - Move
R-stick - Rotate camera
ⓧ   Jump
◎   Action
ⓞ   Attack
⬜   Hold hand / call
⬜   Walk
⬜   Zoom

ICO
Publisher: Sony / Game type: 3D Adventure / Out: Now / Players: 1

THE GAME
Ico was released in the US last year to huge acclaim. It has been substantially altered for its PAL release and has a full-screen PAL conversion — it also includes a 60Hz mode. Director Fumito Ueda and Producer Kenji Kaido led the 23-strong internal Sony Japan team who worked on Ico. It was their first project together.

THE DEMO
This particular stage is perfect for you to get a feel for the entire version. Ico is a unique game, in the sense that it has very precise controls and character abilities. Just jump straight in and enjoy. Go on! Head to your PlayStation 2 right now!

RIGHT, LET'S TAKE THIS OUTSIDE

Realistically, there isn't a huge amount in fighting games. Whack in a pair of fired up characters and put them iin some sort of setting. VF4 has plenty, and they look all great!

Each stage is a decadent visual orgy. Check out the serene village scene with its perfectly constructed pagodas, flocks of birds circling above and sunlight causing lens flare so bright it almost blinds you. Then there's the aquarium level with fish swimming by as you pummel, or the Great Wall of China, or the night time fight on the roof of a skyscraper lit by a hovering helicoptor.

Each is rich with incidental animated detail. Leaves swirling to the ground, banners waving, snow falling, stone paving that cracks or explodes when a character crashes down... it really is difficult to keep your eyes on the action.
OPS2 presents to you the levels of *Virtua Fighter 4*. After all, if there's a fight on you don't want to be struggling around in mud.

1. This is a pretty peaceful place. Who's keen on ruining any hint of tranquility? I am! Let's fight! But don't hit the face!
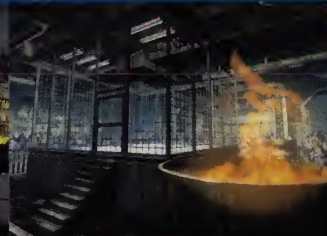
2. The annual family BBQ is a great setting for *VF4*. Get two uncles fighting each other and see who wins. Cheeky.
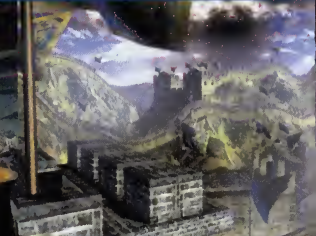
3. People have been fighting one another s dawn of time...so why stop now? Go to an ruins and fight 'old school' style.
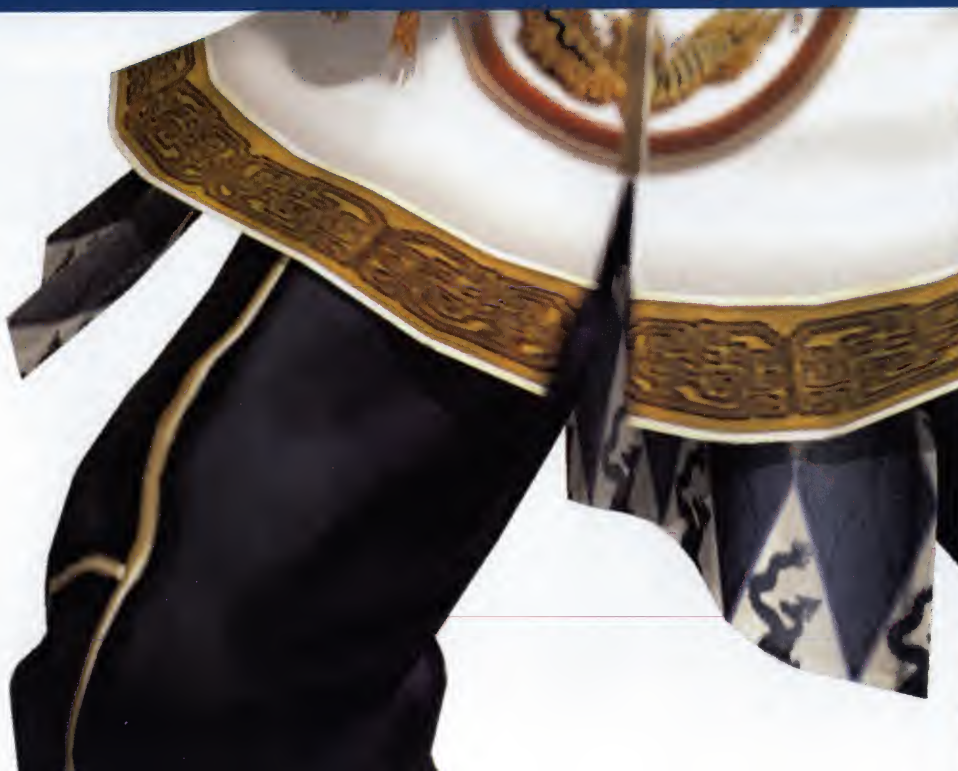
"I am interested in your new boots, but you don't need to ram 'em down my throat!"

PREVIEW

WORDS: RICHIE YOUNG

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

The fight caper was fast becoming a one-horse race for the PlayStation 2. Thank God for Sega.

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Sega AM2
Players: 1 - 2
Release: 10 May

toushing, rumbling, dust ups. Whatever you call them, videogame beat 'em ups have been important fodder for gamers everywhere. Historically, they've been the genre for weekend sessions, after a night out and even to settle the odd argument without having to 'take it outside' yourself. Namco's *Tekken* series has long ruled our lounge rooms but Sega's momentous decision to concentrate on game development means we can all soon enjoy the delights of the heavyweight title's number one contender. *Virtua Fighter 4* is fast approaching.

Judging by the preview build thrashed out at *OPS2*, it'd be a travesty to declare an outright winner at this stage but clearly, Sega wants to retain the coveted crown. *Virtua Fighter 4* is already exhibiting evidence that it exceeds *TTT* in more than one department.

Any arcade enthusiast will already be more than familiar with the *Virtua Fighter* series and its reputation. Debuting back in 1993, Sega used the game to showcase its pioneering efforts in 3D fighting games – during an era when the genre was moving away from the 2D ways of *Street Fighter*. Multi-level arenas, motion-captured characters and the ever-elusive jump in polygon count are three areas where the *Virtua Fighter* games have traditionally led the pack. Obviously, these are the same areas that rival companies are now focussing on and where other beat 'em ups attempt to add their own brand of innovation.

Interestingly, this version of *VF4* shares gameplay similarities with some of its rivals. Gamers are bound to recognise 'borrowed inspiration' from *Dead or Alive 2*, for example.

Virtua Fighter 4 hit our local arcades mid way through →

4. Check out that detail in the sky. Light breaks through and fractures, generating amazing lighting effects for the level.

5. Falling leaves and fighting amongst them is yet another advancement found here. It's better than a raking 'em up!

6. The *Temptation Island* theme seems to be running hot throughout *VF4*. You never know who you might run into!

7. Watch out you don't pick up a few splinters while here. The floor textures are so detailed, we wouldn't be suprised!

8. How ironic! Bridges have traditionally represented peace! Screw tradition, FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

"Don't ever use my toothbrush again!"
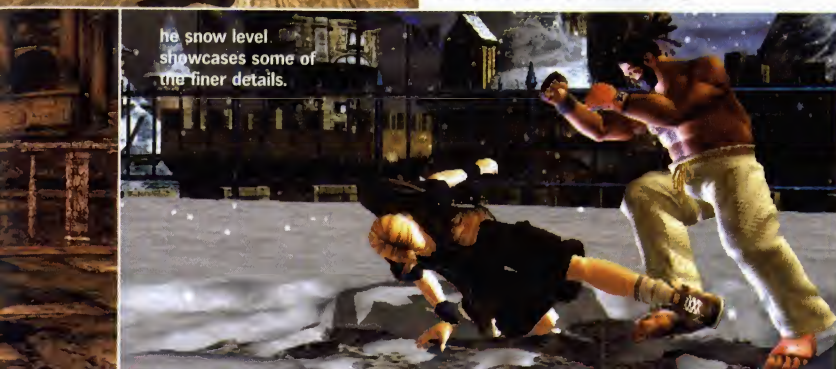
he snow level showcases some of the finer details.

"It's OK. Let it all come out. It's good for you. I told you not to eat that BP hotdog though..."

2001 and while Sega would like us to believe that the PlayStation2 version is a perfect replica, fans of the game will spot immediately that this isn't the case. However, while falling just shy of being identical, the differences are so minimal that to everyday punters in fact, will hardly care.

The graphics in the arcade version remain superior to those on the PS2 build, but that doesn't mean it doesn't look great on PS2 (Sega tells OPS2 that it's 80% complete), and despite the occasional 'flicker' around background objects, it makes for great eye candy. The 'flickering' is due to 'single pass field rendering'; a function of hardware limitations Sega found during the conversion. (Ideally, onscreen objects are rendered with multiple passes.) Still, this minor slight may yet be remedied with the release of the final version.

As in the arcade game, the frame rate flows along at a silky smooth 60 frames per second. Finer level details also hold plenty of allure. Falling leaves have been done before, but shuffling about in the snow is a particularly excellent effect. Background scenes are a visual feast and some of the OPS2 team have been guilty more than once of being distracted from their work! Pagodas, flocks of birds, tropical fish, a skyscraper, helicopter and even the Great Wall of China are present as backdrops. All levels have their own distinct features, and OPS2 is quite fond of the one that bears a striking resemblance to Temptation Island…

These first impressions simply lay the foundation for the meat of the game, though; VF4 is already playing superbly. Greater emphasis on perfecting technique is far more apparent in VF4. To completely master the game, you can't get away with random button presses and each character's fighting style requires precise timing and choice of attack. In this respect, VF4 is much closer to a game of chess than TTT. It's not all flashy kicks and knockout punches, either. Grappling is a primary component of the

game and each character is armed with special attacks and various grappling moves and stances. Grapple and throw combos do the most damage, and attacks usually get based around a well-timed advance. This, coupled with the ring-out feature (retained from previous VF games), usually results in some fairly intense bouts.

The arcade features have been brought over as closely as anyone could hope. Minus the arcade configuration, our preview build plays identically to the arcade, right down to the toggling function that kicks in when you get beaten black 'n' blue and become dizzy.

3D fighting games have come a long way over the last decade and as its predecessors have already demonstrated, collision detection is generally fantastic nowadays. When you throw a punch, it looks and feels like you've connected. When you take a swing at your opponent with your hoof, it looks and feels like you've done some damage. Try and grapple your foe while he's belting your noggin around, and you can be sure that it's not going to work. Fantastic stuff.

Some walled arenas have also been included and in true DOA 2 style, using the barrier to inflict added damage brings obvious benefits. VF4 also does very well in the game modes department, since the final version will include not only Arcade and Vs, but also Kumite (similar to Survival mode), a very comprehensive Training mode, Replay and AI Mode, which it's hoped will allow you to customise and train your own fighter and take to a mate's house (via memory card) for a Vs battle. Some mystery still surrounds the exact details of AI Mode but it is exclusive to the PS2 version and we understand all will be revealed when the game is released.

Three brand new characters debut in VF4 and they will join the 11 already familiar from the previous games. Expect Jacky Bryant, his sister Sarah, Kage, Jeffry, Kung Fu master Akira Yuki, Pai Chan, Lau Chan, wrestler Wolf Hawkfield, Jeffry McWild, Shun Di, Lion Rafale and Aoi

TOUGH AS NAILS

A couple of new characters have been thrown into the *Virtua Fighter* mix. Here OPS2 brings you one of the new breed, as well as an old favourite.

Vanessa Lewis
OPS2 reckons she's the twin sister from Storm in the *X Men*. Only far more butch.

Wolf Hawkfield
This big bloke likes his wrestling and judging by his fighting form, would eat The Rock for breakfast.

Mr and Mrs Bryant should have taught their kiddies not to fight over who's doing the dishes.
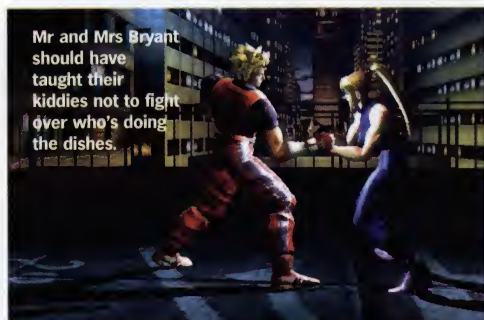
Lei-Fei is another to make his debut in Sega's latest fighter. He doesn't need a haircut, that's for sure.

Grappling moves have strong emphasis in the game's attacks.

Winner

Umenokouji. At this stage, all characters look on par with those in *TTT* and they are equally well animated and fluid in movement.

The two fresh faces are Vanessa Lewis (a fairly rough lass that'd rip your arms off in an arm wrestle) and Lei Fei (a Shaolin monk who can probably be seen somewhere in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*). There's also a third character that will need to be unlocked. The most notable thing about the line-up, however, is the glaring absence of Sumo wrestler Takarashi. Takarashi gained somewhat of a cult following so if you're a fan, prepare to go into grieving!

As far as developing for the PlayStation 2 platform, *VF4* actually represents the elite AM2 division of Sega's very first effort. Considering that and contemplating other potential games they're likely to come up with down the track, it's actually quite a scary thought! When *VF4* goes toe to toe with *TTT*, *Tekken 4* and *Dead or Alive 3*, one winner will emerge victorious and it's bound to be a force to be reckoned with. At this stage, *VF4* is the best prepared for the big showdown. Look for a complete *VF4* review in next month's issue of *OPS2*. □

ON TARGET?
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4

Let's take a quick look at the Big Three when it comes to next-generation beat 'em ups. Looks like *VF4* is starting to stack up!

CHARACTERS
New characters that look fantastic, but where is Takarashi?.

DA KUNG FU
Based on real-life martial arts, there is respectable realism.

GRAPHICS
Matches anything already seen in the likes of *TTT* and *DOA 2*.
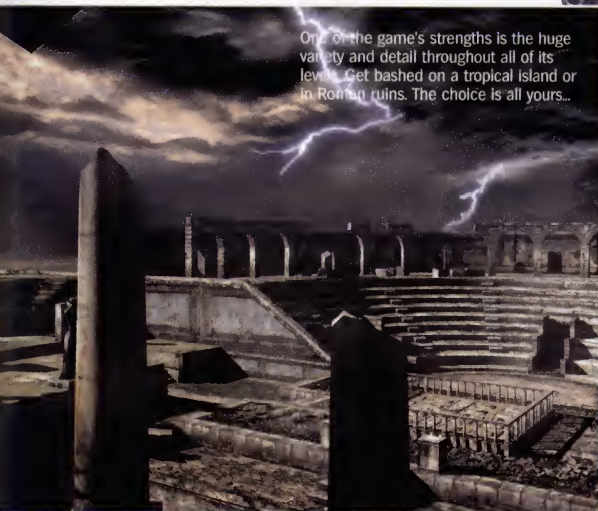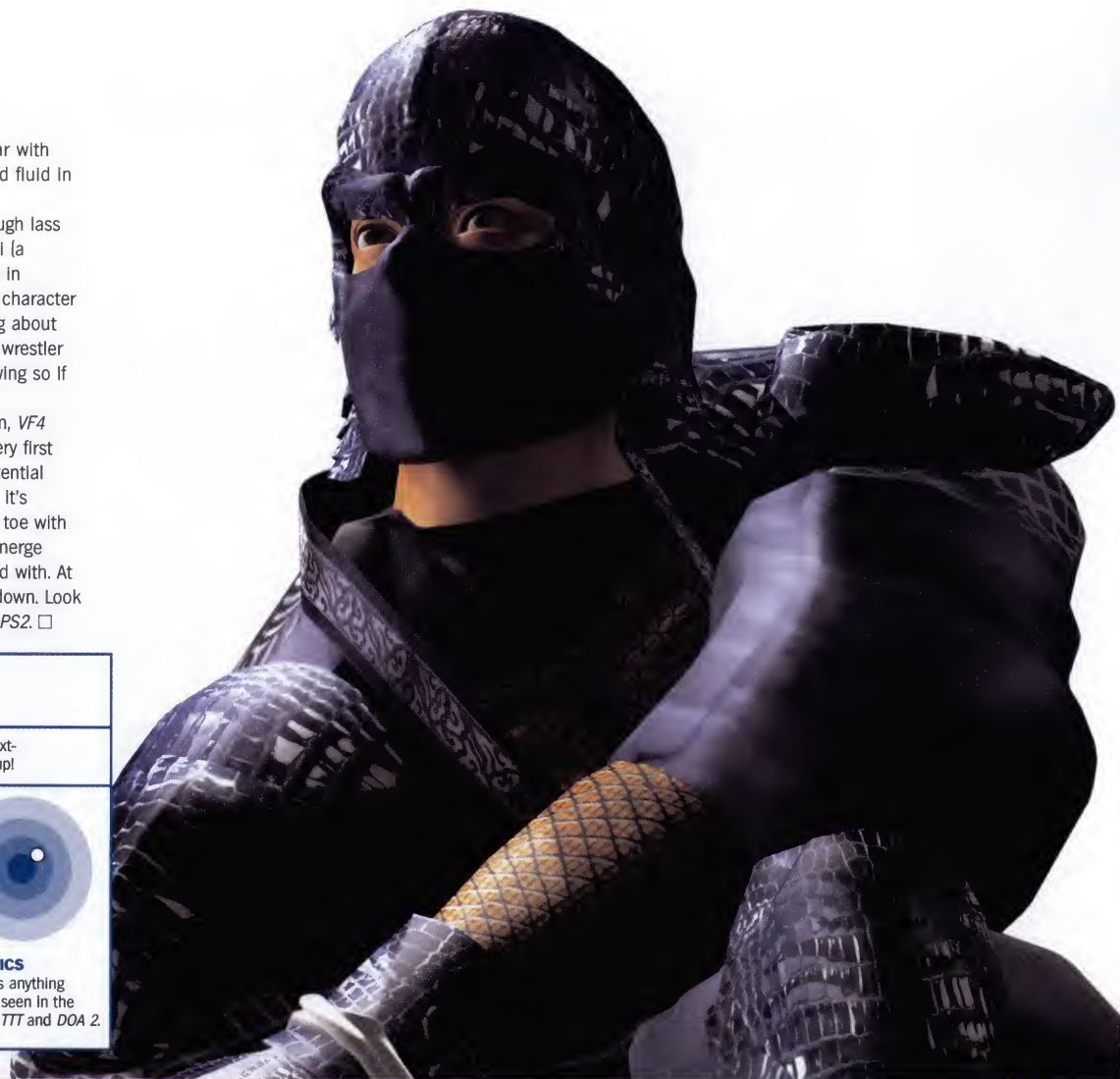
One of the game's strengths is the huge variety and detail throughout all of its levels. Get bashed on a tropical island or in Roman ruins. The choice is all yours...
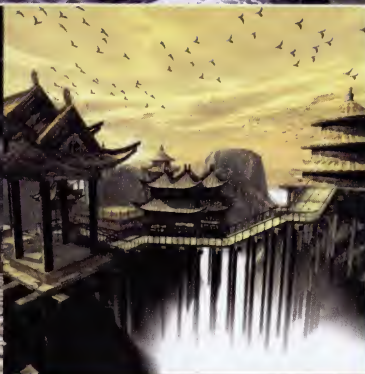
Level scenery is absolutely breathtaking, both in-game and in *VF4*'s intro sequences. This one looks like a cross between scenes from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Birds*!

The cast of *Temptation Island* had to evacuate the place once they found out a crew martial artists had rolled into town. And were looking for some seriously physical action...

Even if you're not one for beat 'em ups, this aquarium level will tickle anyone's fancy. You fight inside, but you're completely enclosed with water and have tropical fish swimming by.

Sometimes, violence isn't the best answer. Here, this pair decided to make up and get in a quick cuddle.

WORDS: MARK WALBANK

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

Seeking out new life, new civilisations and boldly going where quite a few have been before. Make it so.

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Pipedream Interactive
Players: 1-4
Release: May 10

Let's face it, hardcore *Star Trek* fans are willing to forgive anything associated with Gene Roddenberry's vision: the histrionic acting of Dwight Schultz (aka Howling Mad Murdock of *The A-Team* fame), the lengthy moralising that underpinned every episode of *The Next Generation*, even the Munchkin overtones of Captain Kathryn Janeway. For every good *Star Trek* episode you can guarantee there will be five dodgy ones. And so the same goes for the videogame interpretations. Unfortunately, current code indicates that *Star Trek: Voyager Elite Force* is in danger of falling into the latter category. Like William Shatner, it's flabby, slow and likely to give you a horrible sinking feeling.

This is a first-person shooter and, to be fair, it's a genre that has been done to death over the last decade. It's embarrassing that some developers still seem to be struggling to implement smooth movement and controls. And though final tweaks need to be made, it seems unlikely that these key areas will be overhauled in time for release. Movement through the corridors is not only stodgy, with low frame rates, but is slightly jerky, too. There is even a walk command, though why you would want to slow down the already pedestrian pace is unfathomable. This, of course, makes the combat equally frustrating and aiming is a haphazard affair due to the poor control mapping to the analogue sticks. There has been an attempt to implement an auto aim but it is erratic at the best of times.

It's a pity because the polished PC version – of which this is a port – displayed a great deal of imagination and effectively conveyed the atmosphere generated in the TV series. Take for example the opening segment of the game that sees the hero, Ensgn Munro, attempting to rescue his crewmates from the dreaded Borg ship. As you fight through several levels of the franchise's most celebrated alien race, you come across a control panel that, if triggered properly, will free your colleagues. The game proceeds into a cut-scene showing Munro destroying the panel to

MUNRO VS BEING BORG

Ensign Munro can employ some nifty tactics to prevent assimilation by the Borg.

1. It is possible to sneak up on the Borg while they are busy fiddling with their Distribution Nodes.

2. The Distribution Nodes are a bit of an Achilles whole-body for the Borg. Destroy one of them and all enemies in the vicinity power-down.

3. The Borg then become limp and useless. Not a particularly clever defence for the most powerful race in the universe.

The Borg can adapt to your weapons ensuring that you never just use the most powerful gun throughout the levels.

As in the TV series, Voyager is teleported to the middle of another galaxy. This conveniently provides many opportunities to meet alien races.

reveal grey walls, lined with fluorescent strips. Yes, in a perfectly executed twist, the designers have you fighting on the holodeck of the ship as part of your introductory training.

The first few levels of the game have more novel touches. After an attack by a renegade ship, Voyager is flung into the midst of a space graveyard that provides many opportunities for dangerous missions. Other crew members will often join you on these mini quests and the AI of your supporting crew works well. There are other ideas, too. The Borg, for instance, adapt to your weapons making it necessary to change arms for maximum effect. Control panels can also be destroyed to power-down oncoming assailants. And while lift triggers, recharge units and health panels don't bring anything new to the genre, they are introduced in a way that adds balance to the exploration.

The bad control issues and impoverished visuals are a big bone of contention. Also, the textures are repetitive and give the game a decidedly PSone appearance. Sure, Trekkers will forgive much, but even the most loyal Cornish Pasty-head will struggle to love *Elite Force* – unless Codemasters can work some of its magic during the PAL conversion process. □

//In a perfectly executed twist, the designers have you fighting on the holodeck as part of your training//

ON TARGET?
STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE

It might be a next-generation platform, but will this be a genuine next-generation title? May the Force be with it. Oh, sorry wrong film.

CONTROLS	VISUALS	ALIENS
Stodgy and lacking refinement, a lot of tweaking is required.	Some good atmospheric touches, but dated graphics.	Excellent variety, sure to delight the *Star Trek* faithful.

Crew members will give you vital clues to get the ship running.

Assimilation is the Borg's primary objective. Avoid at all costs.

VOICE OF REASON

In an interesting move, the developer got members of the original cast to supply the voiceovers for most of the game's cut-scenes. It certainly adds a level of authenticity missing from most of the *Star Trek* games.

With all due respect, sir, I don't think 'procedure' would have mattered, there wasn't any way I could have possibly rescued them!

Here, Tuvock (Tim Russ) and Commander Chakotay (Robert Beltran) berate you for your efforts in the training mission.
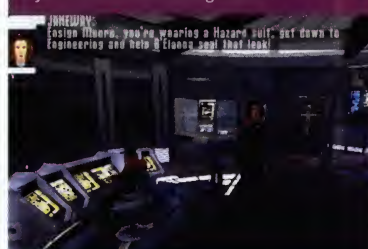
JANEWAY: Ensign Munro, you're wearing a Hazard suit, get down to engineering and help B'Elanna seal that leak!

The petite Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) is present and correct. Unfortunately, there's no, 'follow the yellow brick road' mission.

Munro, what took you so long? We've got a warp core breach in progress! You need to get in there and shut it down! There are two

B-list crew members provide cannon fodder for the Borg (serves her right for scrimping on the Oil Of Olay applications).

The Voyager's new location – a space graveyard – delivers many varied missions.

This Borg may look menacing but his animation is laughable.

> "The *Freekstyle* system forces players to pull tricks and take risks," Rich Rogers, Producer

WORDS: PAUL FITZPATRICK

FREAK STYLE

Like *SSX* on dirt bikes.

Publisher: EA
Developer: Page 44
Players: 1-2
Release: 24 May

*F*reekstyle is developed by EA-affiliated San Francisco studio Page 44, which is also responsible for EA's series of supercross games. The physics engine for producing a freestyle motocross game was already in place – all *Freekstyle* needed was a sprinkle of that EA Sports BIG magic. It may surprise you to discover that Mad Mike Jones, Clifford Adopante (The Flyin' Hawaiian) and Greg 'Albee' Albertyn are actually all real-life freestyle motocross riders, whose popularity in the States puts them on a par with pro skaters and BMXers. Stefy Bau is a former Italian and World women's motocross champion, while Leann Tweeden is the host of an extreme sports TV show in the US.

"Our first step away from the Supercross series was to come up with courses that, to the average person, were a little more exciting," says Goodall. "Supercross simulation courses can be like *NASCAR* – if you're a fan, you'll drive ovals forever, but otherwise you need more variety." Freekstyle will feature six main courses, a few additional courses for the Freestyle mode, and probably a couple of small practice courses with lots of ramps.

Unlike *SSX*, there aren't Dual Trick and Race modes. Instead, the main game uses a trick reward system: when any rider (including yourself) performs a trick, the points go into a communal 'trick jackpot'. Depending on how you finish, you get a percentage of the jackpot added to your score. "The system forces players to pull tricks and take risks," suggests Rogers. Tricks aren't only for points though – they also give you turbo. "For this feature we've tried to combine boost properties from *SSX* and *NBA Street*. There's a simple boost that you can use anytime, but there's also a *Freekout* gauge. Once this meter's full, you can pull the four-button super-sick

trick. You need to have big air, and if you land that trick, you get amazing hyper-speed for several seconds depending on the quality of your super-sick trick. If you can keep doing tricks without wiping out, you can stay in the hyper-speed Freekout mode."

The game's 80 tricks are controlled with the shoulder buttons, just like *SSX* (r executes a tweaked trick). One set of tricks is common to each rider, but they all also have individual unique tricks. If you hold tricks in the air your score increases, but there is a trick score ceiling. Hold too long and your score drops, encouraging you to explore more risky combos.

"We're aiming for the DJ style of *SSX* but with more of a guitar influence in a Limp Bizkit vein," says Goodall. For the two-player, split-screen mode, expect a cat-and-mouse point-stealing affair and plenty of trash talking. □

ON TARGET?
FREEKSTYLE

With so many games along these lines on the shelves already, you have to check out what really matters. How far is it from top gear?

FREAKY STYLEY	SPEED	CONTROL
As a fairly arcadey affair, it does a fair job in throwing insanity in!	The code we played moved along pretty nicely. Should improve.	Decent controls that we are told will receive tweaking soon.

Here, as with all BIG games, the tricks have very silly names.

EXECUTIONER

0   53330   5/8
That's a helluva long way down. Don't fall, or your boost will disappear.
Whip
155

Tricks make boost, boost makes speed. You dig?

Freekstyle producers Rich Rogers and Jill Goodall.
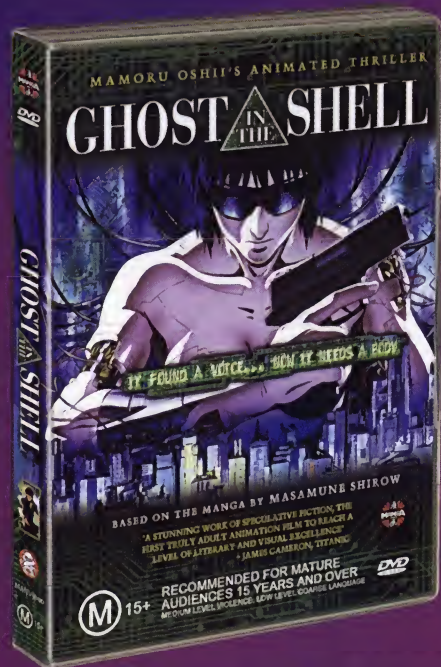
WORDS: MARK WALBANK

SLED STORM

Remember the bigger they are the futher they have to go to better thier previous triumphs.

Publisher: EA
Developer: EA Big
Players: 1-2
Release: 15 March

"H EY, THAT'S snow way to treat a lady," said a passing comedian as we slammed sled rider Tracey Maretti into another lump of frozen scenery. Once the brittle smile finally cracked from our lips, we realised the funny guy was right on the money. This one's rough and tough on both players and riders alike.

As with EA Big's *Tricky*, the core of *Sled Storm* is mastering tricks to increase boost to win races. It's a simple but brilliant combination that ensures you never settle for the complacency of a straight race.

Unfortunately, it's a frustrating one as well, especially when you're presented with tracks that are as open to interpretation as the seven lined up here. Shortcuts litter the snow and you're never quite sure – thanks to a confusing on-screen map – whether you're on the fastest route to victory. We found the best bet is to take every one you chance across and hope you stay on your sled for the duration. Which is where our other major gripe with the code, even in this early state, jumps into stark relief.

Landing tricks is, well, tricky and the current randomness of collision detection doesn't help matters in the slightest. That said, the game's engine is forgiving enough to allow you to improve your sled skills, but when you do part company with your vehicle the recovery time is grindingly slow. It's ironic that, at this point, the character commentary is smart enough to echo your own anger as yet another dumb delay sees you rapidly slip out of contention.

Speaking of characters, both Psymon and Zoe from *SSX Tricky* make the switch from board to sled to compete in this

THINGS TO MAKE YOU GO VROOM

Pulling off tricks is a dangerous business. Thankfully, they're not essential as there are a couple of other ways to fill your Storm Meter with that all important boost.

Cone Aheads: Powersliding into the track markers will soon ramp your speed.

Cutter's Luck: Taking short cuts saves time, naturally, and adds power to your Storm level.

Melted Breeze: Nice motion blur effects kick in as soon as you press Circle to use your Storm boost.

SKY DIVING INSTRUCTOR

To start with you'll learn the hard way that you need to gain as much air as you can in order to pull off any stunt effectively. Then, after what seems like an eternity of crashes, you'll finally get the hang of where best to trick. The amount of boost you receive is based upon the stunt you perform, whether you manage to string together a combo and the distance you travel while tricking. Do well in all three and you'll hit the deck with your Storm Meter charged to the max.

All stunts are launched using the shoulder buttons.

The Superman is easy and quick to execute close to the deck.

Chevrons usually mean there's a big jump coming up.

Cedar Canyon opens with three massive, consecutive jumps.

Hit all four shoulder buttons and you'll activate a "special".

The only way you'll learn is by regularly chewing snow.

game, and there's a new 'Rival Challenge mode' if you want them to go head to head. In this mode, the winner of the faceoff keeps the spoils - their rival's sled. The idea being that you can eventually get to own all 40 sleds in the game.

The rough 'n' tough motif isn't all bad news, though. The characters are suitably grrrr, the rumble through the DualShock 2 hard and loud, and the kick of holding onto first place brings unadulterated satisfaction. It's just that in the dazzling afterglow of both SSXs, we're not convinced this will have the same impact as the original did back in 1999.

Sled Storm is an unforgiving game that's still a bit ragged around the edges at the moment, but one that's trying to emulate the success of its unmotorised stablemate, SSX Tricky. Can't be a bad thing, can it? □

//The kick of holding on to first place brings unadulter ated satsifacti on//

ON TARGET?
SLED STORM

This sport is almost like Splashdown on snow, though there haven't been a huge amount of attempts before. Hopefully, this one will rock.

SPRAWLER?	MACHINERY	EYE CANDY
Mountain size can only be described as decent. Just a *tad* small.	Each machine feels like it has a decent donk underneath.	None in particular to speak of but hey, how good can snow look?

Your fellow sledders may not be too impressed if you get in their way.

THE ICE AGE IS COMING

The seven tracks available in the demo are all extremely freeform in construction. This allows you to experiment and uncover the quickest way back to the starting grid, although it can be seriously confusing at first.

POSITION 3/6
POINTS 6542
TIME

LAP 2/3

TIME 2:53:69

Imagine Santa's grotto run by Sweet Tooth out of Twisted Metal: Black.

LAP 3

An Orient-influenced cityscape with loads of obstacles.

BERMUDA BERG

A graveyard of military hardware surrounded by water.

The truly massive jumps allow enough time for high scoring combos.

POSITION 3/6
POINTS 5576
TIME 1:57:93

2100g

LAP 1/3   COMBO

CHARACTER SELECT   EA BIG

ZOE PAYNE

AGE: 20 HEIGHT: 5'5"
WEIGHT: 135 LBS BODY TYPE: ATHLETIC, CAT-LIKE
EYES: BLUE HAIR: DIFFERENT EACH RACE
NATIONALITY: AMERICAN
RIDING STYLE: AGGRESSIVE

MOVE LEFT OR RIGHT TO HIGHLIGHT A RIDER

SELECT ⊗
BACK ⊗

And here she is: Tricky's Zoe.

WORDS: MAX EVERINGHAM

SMASH COURT TENNIS

The big heads are gone, but the game lives on.

Publisher: SCEA
Developer: Namco
Players: 1 - 4
Release: June
Price: $99.95

Tennis games on PlayStation 2 haven't exactly set the world alight. Always suffering in comparisons with Sega's amazing *Virtua Tennis*, efforts on our console have been quickly forgotten. Namco, however, is coming to our rescue with *Smash Court Tennis Pro* and from what we've seen and played of the game so far, it's shaping up to provide an unparalleled tennis experience on PlayStation 2.

Leaving its penchant for cartoon characters aside for this outing, Namco is bringing us an incredibly lifelike simulation of the strawberries and cream sport, with both male and female players moving with unnerving realism – right down to the way characters like Lindsay Davenport stands knock-kneed at the baseline, a colleague here noted.

There's no denying the influence the Dreamcast game *Virtua Tennis* has had on this title. Like in that game, the simple, but versatile, control scheme – you could get by only pressing the circle button the whole game – is used to fantastic effect. And even the prematurely truncated replays are the same, not quite showing the whole of the play you just pulled off. But of course the game has its own delights too, with the ability to pitch male and female ompetitors against each other in the same game, a learning ability so players get better as they practice and the feeling that you have total control over the shots you play. This build is evidence that a realistic tennis game may be possible after all! And, of course, you can get some four player action in by using a multi-tap. Most impressive for us was that the copy of *Smash Court Tennis Pro* we played was very early code but still totally rocked – tennis fans are in for a treat when the game is released around June. And did we mention Anna Kournikova? ☐

ON TARGET?
SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO

Cartoon characters are out, realism is in. It's early days, but tennis fans certainly do not want to miss this one.

CONTROL
Simple for beginners, complex for pros, the controls are genius.

PLAYERS
Yevgeny, Andre, Martina, Seles and our vey own Pat!

REALISM
Great animations, nice models and realistic venues. Well done.

Tennis is definitely a spectator sport with these on display!

1 PLAYER WIN!
YOU MAKE A CONQUEST OF GAME

You could be mistaken that you're watching a match!

This young lady serves like a girl. Who's world-ranked.

Slam dunk style smashes are included. Go Sampras!

WORDS: MAX EVERINGHAM

NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

It's been a while coming, but this classy FPS spy spoof looks well worth the wait.

Publisher: Sierra
Developer: Monolith
Players: 1
Release: TBC

Good news for FPS fans: No One Lives Forever (NOLF), the stylish, tongue-in-cheek take on the spy action game is coming to PlayStation 2. What we can tell you right off is that the PlayStation 2 version hasn't suffered for the wait; it looks as good, retains all the charm and plays almost identically.

The big worry with first person shooters making the jump from PC to console is usually the control scheme. Ask any seasoned FPS gamer and they'll tell you that nothing will ever replace the mighty PC and keyboard combo. And, in most cases, they've been proven right, but not so with NOLF. With the left stick controlling left/right movement and strafing and the right stick having a 'mouse look' function, it only takes a minute before you're using the two together to zip merrily around the place. The shoulder buttons are used for crouching and jumping and the directional pad for gadget and weapon selection.

So that's a hearty slap on the back for Monolith with the controls conversion, but what about the rest of the game? Well, from the early build we were given to play, OSP2 would say that it's certainly on the right track. The great draws of the PC game were the stylish character and level design, spoof spy plot and the humour that cheekily streaked through the whole thing. Happily, this all seems to have survived the conversion process intact, so the result is a game that even at this early stage looks set to make a stunning debut on PlayStation 2.

The basic premise of NOLF is that you control the inimitable Cate Archer, an 'Operative' for an organization called UNITY. UNITY is the good guys and the sworn enemy of rival bad-guy outfit H.A.R.M. which is (big surprise) hell-bent on world domination. Taking its cue from all our favourite James Bond, Avengers and Man from U.N.C.L.E. shows years ago, NOLF presents a good-natured spoof plot with its roots firmly sunken into the 1960's but which, thanks to Monolith's proprietary LithTech 2.5 engine, is also bang up to date. The technology brings cool effects, including environment mapping and accurate light source modelling, which help lend realism to each scenario. Enemies react fairly intelligently to your attacks, dodging and rolling out of the way, or simply getting the hell out of there, but OPS2 was particularly impressed with the incidental chatter of the NPCs. Stay in the shadows as you creep up to a couple of H.A.R.M. thugs and you'll often be treated to a genuinely funny exchange, much like the dialogue from the Austin Powers movies.

NOLF features 15 missions that span 60 levels. There's a very healthy mix of gaming styles, from driving vehicles to jumping out of a plane. Then, of course, there are the toys. All kinds of powerful and exotic weapons are modelled, but it's the gadgets that get the laughs. From a deadly barrette (hair clasp) to a OPS2's favourite, the P-421 Canine Persuader (mechanical poodle), you're never stuck for an amusing method of causing mischief.

OPS2 swears the game is looking as good as it did back in 2000 on a high-end gaming PC which cost thousands of dollars. Now you can experience one of the funniest, most polished and downright fun games ever made for a fraction of the cost on PlayStation 2. Sometimes it's great to be alive. □

ON TARGET?
NO ONE LIVES FOREVER

Having already conquered the main issue of control, this funny first person shooter looks set for the big time.

HUMOUR	CONTROL	GRAPHICS
Sassy, laugh-out-loud quips abound.	As good as it gets for an FPS on a console.	Easily rivals OPS2's PC version

bad guys
sit back
to their
anter.
them.

Some of the charactres are oh-so-Sixties.

Ah yes, the Hampton Carbine. Great for a silent takedown.

Sometimes you just need to go in shooting...

...but at others, taking them by surprise is the best option.

WORDS: OLIVER HURLEY

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

Could this cheeky little number from Codemasters be the last time we see Mike Tyson in a boxing ring?

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Codemasters
Players: 1-2
Release: May

Once crowned the 'baddest man on the planet', Mike Tyson is now perhaps best known for being a ferocious ear nibbler who's rather partial to the odd leg of Lewis lamb. Yet the bulldog-faced boxer must retain a degree of infamy because he can still get himself signed up to a game based on the 'noble art'.

MTHB doesn't take the arcade-style route of the *Ready 2 Rumble* series, but neither does it go for the sim option. Instead, it plays much like a 3D beat-'em-up – albeit one in which you can't kick or throw fireballs. There are many ways to make your opponent eat canvas, although getting them there is not easy. Any game that utilises every single button on the pad is never going to win the *Pong* award for simplicity, but you'll soon be forced to master the variety of jabs, hooks and feints in order to keep up with the frantic pace of the game.

The damage system doesn't follow your average beat-'em-up configuration either. Each fighter has two energy bars which allows the game to take account of recovery times (the amount of injury your blows cause depends on how much energy you've got). Each time you throw a punch, you'll deplete some of your own reserves. So, if your opponent is adept at blocking and dodging, it's possible to lose a fight by punching yourself out.

With a name like Mike Tyson in the title you'd expect the Queensbury rules to be flouted, and you won't be disappointed here. Both low blows and illegal elbows to the face are included in your moves list. More orthodox is the selection of special moves and combos – four for each fighter – which are unlocked as you progress through the game. Winding up for big finishing punches is simply a case of holding down the relevant button for

Big Mike in his glory days, back when he was actually allowed in the ring.

The main thrust of the single-player game is the ability to unlock new modes and characters. While this does help to improve longevity, it can be frustrating knowing that a significant proportion of the game isn't accessible to you. It's even taken to the extreme of not being able to play as Tyson - you know, the bloke whose name is on the box – at the start of the game.

longer. The downside to this is that as you wait to unleash your fists, your gloves glow and inform your opponent that a bit of dodging might be in order.

Sitting alongside the usual menu screen-botherers are Speed Boxing (Time Trial with fisticuffs), the Survival mode-inspired Undisputed Champ and the ominous-sounding Mike Tyson Challenge, in which you must KO each opponent in the first round. As well as Tyson, there are a further 15 current heavyweights to fight, although only dedicated fight fans will recognise any more than a handful of them. Suffice to say, no-one's going to be buying this because it's got Danell Nicholson in it. Except for Danell Nicholson's mum, perhaps. The bouts take place in 20 arenas, based around a variety of locations, from Las Vegas to Tokyo, and they're notable for housing the most believable-looking fight crowds yet (remember the 2D abominations in *SmackDown! 'Just Bring It'*).

With a variety of modes that would put many a beat-'em-up to shame, *Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing* promises rewarding and engaging gameplay. Indeed, you'd never have thought there were quite so many different ways to hit someone in the face. □

//With a name like Mike Tyson in the title, you'd expect the Queensbury rules to be flouted//

ON TARGET?
MIKE TYSON BOXING

Is Codies' fist-fest a fine example of the noble art or will it just leave you feeling confused?

ROSTER
Tyson himself is the only huge-name fighter in the game.

MODES
Features a pleasingly imaginitive array of pugilistic options.

GORE
Includes facial damage but no biting of ears or legs.

ROUND 01 1:22 VIDOZ

Just hope you're never actually looking up at Mike from this angle.

VIDOZ SPARRING 2:10 TYSON

HARRISON ROUND 1 1:28 SCOTT

Sparring is actually pretty tough with Tyson as an opponent.

Severe button bashing is needed to peel yourself off the mat.

Quick, bite his ear! Or even his foot!

WORDS: ED DAWSON

JET ION

Jet Ion GP is a Wipeout clone which, at the moment, is a bit of a car wreck.

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Crave Entertainment
Players: 1
Release: TBC

All the signs are good for Jet Ion GP so far: the menus look polished, there's calming music playing smoothly in the background and your requisite snappy presentation of spinning 3D anime-style aircraft models is backed up by rather vivid descriptions and solid English in the on-screen text (being a port of the Japanese game developed by Gust). Expecting something rather nice, you launch the game, but the good impression quickly fades.

Jet Ion GP is a Wipeout clone – and a clone that's seriously showing its age. Gust put the game out in Japan in June 2000, and the intervening two years haven't been kind. Its very poor reception in its home country got it struck off the list for a US debut six months later, for goodness' sake, and the promised two-player mode for the American release disappeared without trace.

The premise is that you pilot one of a series of flying racers with various handling characteristics, race against other similar craft and try to destroy them with weapons and/or outrun them with the predictable turbo boosts. The twist Jet Ion GP has added is the ability to fly right off the track - very high off it, in fact. At an altitude of about two hundred metres above the course, you finally hit an invisible ceiling. As a result you occasionally crash into skyscrapers and freeway underpasses near the track. This 'flight' feature gives you lots of room to dogfight about as you engage the other players and could have been leveraged into quite an interesting offering. Instead, the gimmick is not at all supported by well-conceived gameplay dynamics, good graphics, or passable presentation. It's even possible, when diving down to return to the track, to fly straight through it. The fact that Jet Ion GP looks likely to be released with such staggering flaws is pretty breathtaking and – we hope – will not actually become reality, although the preview build we were given is said to be 80% complete.

The graphics and effects departments are where Jet Ion GP really falls down. The textures for trackside objects are just awful. There are only very scant attempts to visually illustrate the impacts with graphical effects and we were shocked to find large sections of the track appeared as raw wireframes, with other portions flat shaded in one colour. Flat shading with no textures, the most rudimentary of 3D surface detailing, went out in the early nineties after early projects like Doom popularised more sophisticated techniques. It certainly has no place on the Playstation 2, least of all in a large percentage of the visible objects on screen. Realistically, it's unlikely such a major component will be dramatically improved in the final product. Don't hold your breath. □

ON TARGET?
JET ION

When a game is cancelled and slated elsewhere, how excited should Australians be about it?

GRAPHICS
Vomit inducing.

SOUND
Pleasant enough as background.

GAMEPLAY
Flawed execution of a wacky idea.

BEST LAP
1'14"524

1722.0 wph
F POWER

Maintaining your craft somwhere around here is not as easy as it should be...

REPLAY   COURSE03/STANDARD Lumine BAY AREA
position 2 LAP 2/3
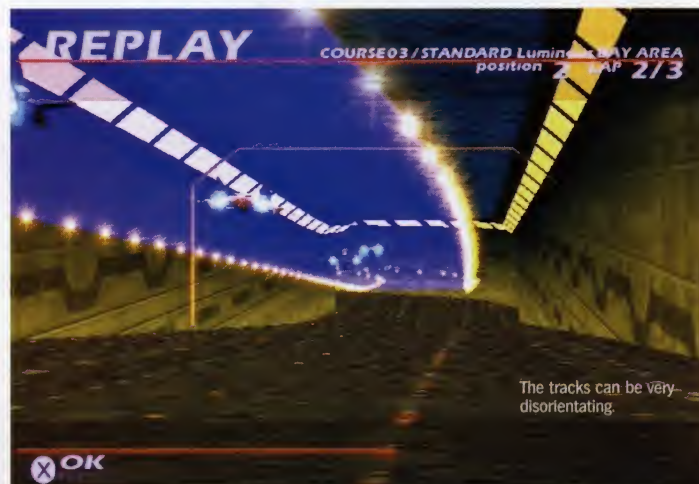
The tracks can be very disorientating.

OK

REPLAY   COURSE01/STANDARD Marinepark F
position 2 LAP 17

You may never see the opposition again after the start.

Course 3/STD
Trinklenplis

POSITION 02/8
LAP TIME
1'02"764
0'46"219

RECORD
3'49"524
BEST LAP
1'02"764

2313.2 wph
F POWER

LOCK
LASER

051
SHIELD

WORDS: ED DAWSON

SPACE RACE

Originally a Dreamcast title, *Looney Tunes Space Race* looks bigger and better on PlayStation 2.

Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: Melbourne House
Players: 1 - 4
Release: April

The game opens to an excellent cel-shaded Foghorn Leghorn delivering his usual style of bombastic speech, beginning with "I say, I say hear this, boy!". The characters and universe of Warner Brother's familiar cartoon characters have been expertly brought to life with the only really appropriate graphics technique for this kind of thing, cel-shading, which gives 3D objects and characters the subtle appearance of a hand-drawn illustration in motion.

The game world is really nicely detailed, with perfectly matched colour schemes supported by an absolutely hammering frame rate, which must be up in the region of 60 fps. The characters are racing each other in a contest to see who gets hold of a lifetime supply of Acme products. The powerups you get to use as weapons are styled after the classic Acme gear depicted in the cartoons, including the requisite red rockets and outlandish mechanical traps of various kinds.

The game looks like it will play out something like *Super Bombad Racing,* with a selection of the *Looney Tunes* characters riding rockets, mechanised carrots, hovering bikes and small planes. You can play as Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Bugs Bunny, Wile. E. Coyote, Sylvester the cat and Yosemite Sam. Considering that this is a *Looney Tunes* game set in space, it's odd that Marvin the Martian, famous for saying "Where's the kaboom? …there was supposed to be an earth-shattering kaboom!" is not featured in the beginning. You can unlock him however, along with Porky Pig, with special tokens you earn while playing the game.

You decide how to spend these tokens to unlock tracks, characters, concept art and even a movie file, which requires one million tokens.

This PlayStation 2 upgrade features two new tracks for a total of thirteen and five new Acme "gags" which are the in-game weapons. The game now has difficulty settings, which it lacked previously.

The overall presentation of *Looney Tunes Space Race* is all class. The game is well set out, seamlessly rolls from gameplay to menu and back, looks gorgeous in motion and is quite entertaining to play. The Acme weapons in particular are a highlight of the slapstick violence flavour one would expect from a game in this vein. Surprisingly too, the controls are finely tuned, giving the game more of a *Wipeout* feel than a *Mario Kart* sort of experience. You can make sharp movements as well as gradual banking motions, with just the right amount of air skidding to be convincing. We're certainly looking forward to this game when it releases. It looks to be a very high quality port. □

ON TARGET?
SPACE RACE

Kart games have come at gamers thick and fast since massive popularity struck with *Mario Kart* on the SNES. Will this stack up?

POWER UPS
Very comical selection of Looney Tunes goodies. A highlight.

FEEL
The game has done a decent effort in capturing the essence..

COMPARISONS
At this stage, it is looking like it will be a mid-range kart game.

Who's dat? Daffy? On the set of *Road Runner*?

On the way to Bugs' house, to drink his mean carrot juice.

The cartoon graphics will impress Warner Bros' fans.

The Coyote in his familiar position in pursuit aboard an ACME rocket.

Great ideas for transport, this racer has plenty of charm.

Some cool futuristic levels are bound to spice up the action and add variety.

WORDS: DEREK LEE

PRO RALLY 2002

Not another rally game? Well, who can ever pass up the opportunity to spray dirt and mud into a crowd of innocent bystanders.

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Ubisoft
Players: 1 - 2
Release: TBA

Pro Rally 2002 is Ubisoft's debut version of the game on PS2 with last year's version receiving a lukewarm reception. With the glut of rally games currently available, and the promise of better ones to come, time will tell whether *Pro Rally 2002* has what it takes.

From the very first run , it's apparent that track design and layout could use plenty of work, although it appears from the preview code that most of the stages are pretty much set and that only background crowd and scenery detail will be added before the final release. Whilst detail will add a few nice touches to some sparse-looking tracks, that won't make up for tracks which are lacking in creativity. Most tracks feel very similar to one another, with the only variable being surface and environment.

There certainly isn't a well thought out mix of straights, corners and hairpins, and the tracks are flat and uninteresting, with few opportunities to get air or rumble across some uneven ground. You don't get much of a feel for the tracks when playing simply because they are so one-dimensional. Rally driving is all about planning, where to attack and make up time, and where to back off and negotiate a good line. At this stage, *Pro Rally 2002* just doesn't offer good enough track design to make the courses feel like something more than a random amalgamation of twists and turns.

As you'd expect, cars from all the manufacturers are featured and on the whole they are quite nicely modelled and textured. Collision damage is barely in evidence at this stage, and all the little features that add to the whole experience, such as dirt and mud clinging to the cars, will hopefully be added before release. *Pro Rally 2002* also doesn't appear to have much patience for cars that veer off the track. Part of the problem appears to be because track boundaries haven't been finally defined, so what

you're left with is cars running into an invisible wall, getting stuck for a few seconds, the game resetting, and then the vehicles being teleported back onto the track. The game does move along at a nice enough framerate at present but it will be interesting to see whether there is any noticeable decrease or pop-up once the scenery and is put in place.

The control system could also use some tightening up. Steering on the whole is a tad unresponsive which, being such a crucial feature of rally driving, is a worry. Given that *Pro Rally 2002* features an inordinate number of turns on their snake-like courses, there could be some frustrating times ahead.

There's plenty left to do in the sound department as well with the one big omission being direction from a navigator. To leave out such an important feature of rally driving is inexcusable and makes the whole driving experience empty. There isn't even any decent in-game music or lively commentary to fill in the gap.

Although *Pro Rally 2002* appears to be leaning more towards the arcade market, it would still be nice to see the ability to tweak car settings before final release. At this stage, there are no decisions to be made beyond choice of car and transmission, which again has the effect of dumbing down the whole racing experience. □

ON TARGET?
PRO RALLY 2002

You can never own too many rally games, so let's hope that this one shapes up. OPS2's definitely have their fingers crossed!

TRACKS	CONTROL	SCENERY
Haphazard sprawling tracks need injection of thought and variety.	Some minor fine-tuning should make steering silky smooth.	Nicely detailed on some courses but looky patchy on others.

The mechanic was charging by the hour but was nowhere to be seen.

Hey, which way did you say it was to the carpark?"

Just add an oil slick for increased fun. Mark Webber drives the kids to school...

Car models are decent but fall short of being worthy of receiving glorified descriptions.

WORDS: RICHIE YOUNG

FREQUENCY

This seriously hip beat machine will have even the least musically-inclined punters tapping to the groove.

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Harmonix
Players: 1
Release: June

M usical aptitude is the one thing beyond most punters and it's something not normally associated with videogames. Since the old grey box landed in the laps of gamers back in 1995 though; games with a musical premise have come from being novel affairs and niche titles, to seriously in-depth games worthy of sitting alongside any beat 'em up or 3D adventure in a game library.

As cute as they were, games like *PaRappa the Rapper*, *Um Jammer Lammy*, *Bust a Groove* and the Bemani games *Drum Mania* and *Beat Mania* paved the way for titles like *Rez* and now, *Frequency* developed for the PlayStation 2.

OPS2 have been hooked on the yet-to-be completed version of Frequency and it's already proving that it is a thoroughly accomplished affair.

Frequency is a music game based around achieving momentum of the beat and rhythm, and finally furnishing the sound with elements of voice, synthesisers, stringed instruments and scratches.

American developer Harmonix have worked with some of the world's most prominent artists (as well as other less-decorated musicians) to produce a game that's destined to open up the world of music to a legion of game fans.

Visually psychedelic, *Frequency* looks both simple and entrancing. There is no single way to describe the look achieved. Regardless, it's the music of course, that drives the action along and the visuals serve mainly to compliment the game through the on-screen prompts. To liken the experience to something more tangible however, it feels as though you're moving down a snaking tunnel.

For those familiar with games like *PaRappa*, *Frequency* plays along those very same lines. Relying on on-screen prompts, you must match button presses with what is happening on-screen. With accurate timing, you'll complete that track (say, drums), then you'll be able to move onto the next track (rhythm) before moving onto adding the voice elements. Sounds simple enough, but the game gets very complicated and depending on what tracks you choose, the musical arrangement is not predetermined and you can re-mix them yourself.

Power-ups and scoring multipliers mix up the affair, adding plenty of increased options mid-gameplay. When the music gets more frenetic, *Frequency* is really enjoyable and *OPS2* predicts it will fast become a favourite at parties.

With tracks supplied by the likes of Paul Oakenfold, Fear Factory No Doubt, the Crystal Method and DMC Turntables World Champ DJ Q Bert who can argue? It will even have all this street-scred to boot! □

ON TARGET?
FREQUENCY

It's looking like this gem is bound to make massive improvements on the music videogame genre. But seriously, how come?!

RAPPIN' AT YA
The real musical artists included are bound to impress all music fans.

GRAPHIC EXPLOSION
The ever changing and random nature will keep your eyes sharp!

GROOVY BABY
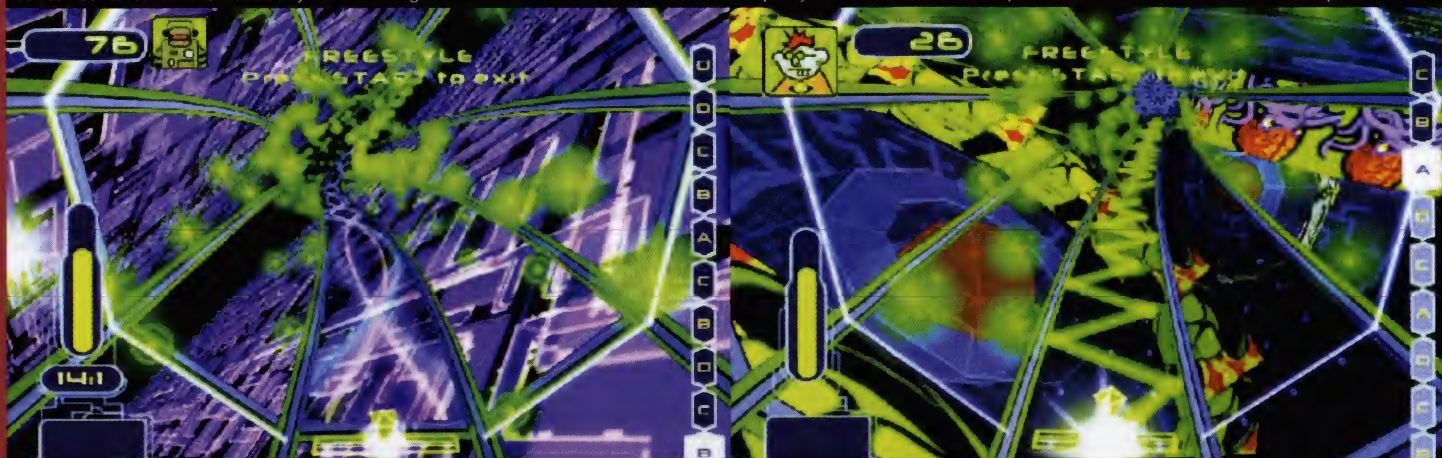One of the best parts is being able to re-mix tracks of your faves.

It's not much to look at now, but wait till you see it moving!

Frequency looks like a cross between a pair of flares from the '60s and a track from *WipEout*!

You could be mistaken for thinking you're at a Uni party for the first time...

The green bar on the left-hand side is your power meter. Big and green means good!

WORDS: PAUL FITZPATRICK

DARK SUMMIT

What do you get when you cross an action adventure with a snowboarding game?

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Radical Entertainment
Players: 1-2
Release: 29 March

L et's try something. Don't think about a scarlet cow on rollerblades. You did, didn't you? The power of suggestion is a remarkable thing, and nothing makes you conjure an image in your head faster than being told not to. With this in mind, may we introduce you to the snowboarding excesses of *Dark Summit*, a new addition to the growing club of 'value added extreme sports' games. Just don't compare it to *SSX Tricky*, okay? No, really. They're very different kettles of stalefish. Mostly.

Dark Summit takes snowboarding's trick-pulling shenanigans in a new direction. It's an objective-based action adventure, complete with plot and a 'stick it to the man' boarders vs authority spin. Your job is to plough, ollie and 'flying squirrel' through 45 challenges and missions on the slopes of the fictional Mount Garrick. The missions range from the predictable 'perform six grab tricks within a time limit', to the free-range bizarre – it won't be long before you're demolishing outhouses, decapitating snowmen and jumping vats of toxic goo like they're regular events on *Ski Sunday*. Complete objectives, rack up reputation points and you'll not only unlock higher slopes, new characters and new challenges but you'll also get to upgrade equipment and your Goretex-boho wardrobe. There's also a split-screen multiplayer mode with speed, trick and demolition-based showdowns to get stuck into; it's arguably more fun than the mission mode.

Dark Summit is an ambitious game and has a distinctive arcade look that suits the anarchic gameplay down to its Yeti boots. However, there's another key respect in which it differs from *SSX Tricky* and, worryingly, it's not an encouraging contrast. The control system is disappointingly sluggish, with button presses sometimes ambling towards onscreen execution – very frustrating in a genre where quick reactions demand responsive and instantaneous feedback.

Moreover, that genre-essential sense of velocity is often missing. This problem is largely the by-product of the objective-led gameplay. Since you're constantly looking for items, people and so on, the racing element of the sport is marginalised. Trying to knock Chief O'Leary's chicken dinner off its picnic table is all very well, but it doesn't have the same visceral grip as bombing down a frictionless hill on a waxed plank with four trick-pulling maniacs gaining on you. There's also the potential problem of repetition. Fail to get enough points to open the next slope and you're forced to go down the same run over and over. True, there are short cuts and multiple routes, but forcing players to cut their teeth on a solitary stretch of powder is a risky strategy.

If the control system can be tightened, there is a lot to like about *Dark Summit*, not least the attempt to give snowboarding a grungy, plot-fuelled purpose beyond pure trick-pulling. It's not *SSX Tricky*, but that's a badge it wears with pride. Will it wear as well with gamers? □

ON TARGET?
DARK SUMMIT

An ambitious spin on the 'value-added snowboarding' genre that promises a lot, but is currently undermined by sluggish controls.

ACTION
There's definitely no shortage of things to do.

CONTROLS
Treacly and unresponsive to say the very least.

GRINDING
More rails than you'll find on the City to Parramatta line.

SUMMIT'S WRONG

So just what exactly is going on up Mount Garrick?
A favourite with hardcore snowboarders for years, Mount Garrick's slopes provide phat air and trick-pulling potential in spades. At least that's how it used to be, before Chief O'Leary became the resident ranger. His dislike of snowboarders was clear from the outset and pretty soon he was limiting their access to certain areas of the mountain. That was annoying enough, but now O'Leary has closed the summit entirely and there are rumours that he's not the only one keeping people off the slopes. The word is that a UFO has crash-landed up there and a faceless government organisation is keen to keep spectators away. Enter Naya, skilled boarder and your character in *Dark Summit*. When an unidentified 'mole' contacts her and gives her access to Mount Garrick she sets off to find out what exactly is going on behind the barriers. But she's going to have to keep her wits about her if she's to avoid the authorities…

Naya may be cool but she seems to dress in the dark.

What's that St Bernard doing bottom right? It's gaining on you is what.

Check out the novelty sized chicken! Go on! It's huge!

Two-player games are arguably more fun than Story mode.

In *Dark Summit*, there are heaps of things to do.

One plank good, two planks bad. The bad guys prefer skis.

WORDS: ED DAWSON

MONSTER JAM

Monster Trucks: who doesn't love 'em? *Monster Jam* puts you behind several tons of rubber.

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: EMEA
Players: 1 - 2
Release: May

Who drives Monster Trucks, anyway? Excessively heavy people in flannelette shirts we expect, who ballast the actual vehicle weight with the accumulated baggage of a lifetime of burritos with extra cheese. These people naturally have a lot of energy and aggression to burn, behind the wheel of a monster truck. *Monster Jam* is the embodiment of those TV specials where monster trucks are pitted against all manner of inferior, less destructible objects. You drive these fast, hulking blocks of steel around on their enormous tyres, crushing everything in your path.

The game sees you driving a series of recognisable and famous monster trucks in a third person camera view, in a range of competitive missions against other monster trucks. From destruction derbies to checkpoint races for cash, the action is always fierce. On top of the already excessive mayhem the game provides, you have the opportunity to pick up projectile weapons which are then mounted on the roof. They're highly destructive, allowing you to slice through your opponents like coleslaw.

You can play a straight monster truck Deathmatch, "Cash" mode which is a deathmatch with cash items you need to also collect, and "points" mode which measures the deadly efficiency of your truck-combat skills. *OPS2* would like to see a greater variety of crushable cars and other things, as the game in its current state is more "combat monster trucks" than a glorious adventure running over smaller things.

The showmanship of the 'truck identities is faithfully recreated, with certain trucks emitting signature quotes when attacking, obviously this is supposed to be amplified out of some kind of megaphone as they are on TV. Trucks such as Goldberg, Grave Digger and Wolverine are featured, which will trigger very vague recollections if you have ever seen monster truck footage of any kind. More of the pure entertainment angle is apparent in the environments, such as the Las Vegas Strip and the hill with the Hollywood sign on it. The graphics are reasonably polished, in the fashion of such games. There's no self-shadowing or advanced lighting to speak of yet, but this can always change before release. At this point, it just looks like a fun, fast action game with monster trucks in it.

Unfortunately, the graphics don't look very promising at this stage. We'd really hope to see far more effects and detail in such a simple action game. For the final version, here's hoping.

As there isn't exactly a stack of monster truck games on the PS2 this one may well win first place. With its authentic recreations of the cable-TV truck 'personalities', it's hard to see how fans of the concept wouldn't be tempted. Graphics aside. □

ON TARGET?
MONSTER JAM

The sprawling plot and hefty duration won't suit all. But those who do indulge will be rewarded with opulent environments and mini-games.

AUTHENTICITY	TRUCKER	GRAPHICS
Those with a desire for monster trucks will be well-pleased here.	The trucks look good, and real-life ones are included. Sweet.	Apart from the trucks, shocking at this stage. Needs big changes!

If you have a penchant for running over things, it's likely that you'll find *Monster Jam* halfway decent when it gets released.

Some of the levels are of the indoor variety. Probably because they are easy to do! These stages look like levels from *Robot Wars*.

Outdoor areas make it plain to see, but at this stage graphics are a huge flaw in *Monster Jam*. While *OPS2* is hoping that gameplay improvements are received as well, outdoor levels like one are beyond disappointment.

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Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to assassinate the *Ground Force* team. Dead!

and just incapacitate as well as murder. Similar again is the inclusion of a long list of lethal weapons with which to complete your job: knives, handguns, sniper rifles, bombs and grenades.

As well as fatally wounding your targets you'll be able to sedate and pacify them with chloroform, poison darts and stun guns. Night vision goggles, lock picks and remote cameras will also become an essential part of your kit. Players will be able to acquire and carry these items from mission to mission with the use of the game's enhanced inventory system with other hidden bonuses becoming available as you progress.

Although the original *Hitman, Codename 47*, has already been released for PC back in November 2000, the developer has promised that this sequel will be anything but a simple PC-conversion. "The *Hitman 2* team is building on the success of the original in order to develop an original and stylish game built from the ground up for PS2," promises Flosser. This means PS2 gamers will receive an entirely new experience, made specially with the console in mind.

When released later this year, *Hitman 2* will go up against a number of other high-profile PS2 first-/third-person adventures/shooters such as *Max Payne, Deus Ex, Medal Of Honour* and *Soldier Of Fortune: Gold*. At the very least, *Hitman 2* should offer some of the more inventive gameplay of the titles and *OPS2* is looking forward to getting its hands-on preview code in the not to distant future. □ **GW**

*Hitman 2: Silent Assassin is scheduled for release through Eidor.
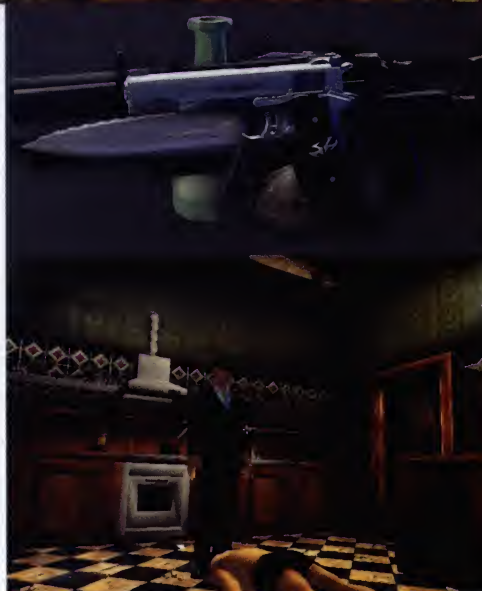
(Above) *Hitman 2* is blessed with a frighteningly gruesome set of weaponry. (Below) Lord knows what went on here...

Is it us or isn't anyone allowed to carry just the one gun these days?

Ryan McKane
Driver

Race Driver

V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER

What s more fun than hurtling around Bathurst in your favourite V8 Supercar? That s right, nothing at all.

OPS2 HAS RECENTLY returned from the race pits out the back of Codemasters with a swag of new details on the new title in the hugely popular *TOCA* series. The localised version of the game, *V8 Supercar Race Driver*, is due to make its debut on PS2 in June this year, and promises more realism, more collisions, and more detail than an F1 sim on steroids. Because of the massive support for the sport already in Australia, the U.K. developers have made every effort to make sure local race fans will have the chance to relive every facet of the real-life events that take place locally.

Boasting 38 of the world's most famous race circuits, blueprints have been gathered and included from seven of Australia's fastest tracks, including Bathurst's Mt Panorama, Philip Island's Grand Prix Circuit, Oran Park Raceway, Adelaide's Street Circuit, Eastern Creek Raceway, Canberra's Street Circuit, and Sandown's International Motor Raceway. These will depict every straight, corner, and hairpin bend of the real-life counterparts, including many of the familiar surroundings. Famous tracks from other countries include Brands Hatch, and Silverstone in the U.K., Charlotte, and Las Vegas in the U.S., plus Italy's Monza, Japan's TI Circuit AIDA, and Sweden's Mantrop Park.

But what's a racing game without something to drive? Codies plans to include no less than 42 licensed petrol guzzlers and their regular drivers. At the top of most people's list will no doubt be Craig Lowndes and his famous Ford Falcon AU, or Jason Bargwanna and his spiffy Holden Commodore VX. There are also cars from Mitsubishi, Alfa Romeo, Subaru, Toyota, Dodge, Saab, Lotus, Audi, and more.

With the arrival of the series on PS2, a special feature of note is the new dynamic damage engine. Because of the aggressive nature of this type of racing, drivers will have every chance to give as much damage as they get from other drivers, only this time you'll be able to see and feel every scratch and dent. The damage engine devised for V8 Supercar Race Driver is based on real-life data, which involved creating a computer simulation of a crash test facility. This has enabled the developers to make sure the cars react authentically on impact with the correct movement and crumpling of car body parts.

The result is *V8 Supercar Race Driver*'s Finite Element Modelling (FEM) damage engine. The FEM damage model accurately simulates the deformation of a car's body on impact, calculating how both the internal structure and outer bodywork of the cars react. This physics-based approach offers a new level of realism, with different impact results every time depending on the exact conditions of the collision.

Another first for the *TOCA* series is the new storyline and characters. This mix of real-life drivers and locations, along with game characters sees the pace of the game driven (pun intended) along through high quality cinematic scenes in between the race events. Playing the part of promising rookie race driver Ryan McKane, players will need to work their way from the back of the pack to front of the leader board on the touring circuit. Looking at this latest batch of screenshots, we think you'll agree, *V8 Supercars Race Driver* is set to leave the rest of the pack in a cloud of dust.

Gotta warm the tyres up first.

OPS2 has just today had this EXACT experience. Fantastic.

All your favourite cars will be modeled.

Fiction or reality? *Race Driver* looks set to be a V8 Supercars fan s wet dream.

BRITNEY DANCE BEAT

And the crowd of teenange boys goes wild.

WHEN PUBLISHER THQ announced at last year's E3 videogaming trade show that it had plans to make a Britney Spears game, there was a resounding sigh, as everyone's eyes rolled back at the sheer thought. Rapid fire questions quickly ensued. Would it amount to just a collection of old video clips thrown together? Or would it be right up there with Jaleco's pitiful *Dance Dance Revolution*, which actually featured the video to 'Baby One More Time' but was so average it wasn't funny? Or would it be even worse?

Fast forward eight months to this February's THQ Editor's Day and *OPS2* hangs its head in shame for *Britney's Dance Beat* looks just great. Ostensibly a Bemani dancing game, THQ has entrusted Japanese developers Enix to bring the Lolitaesque popstress to PS2. It's a wise move given Enix created the cult toe-tapping game *Bust-A-Move* (*Bust-A-Groove* outside Japan) for PSone, released in 1998 to rave reviews for its PaRappaesque gameplay and pre-*Space Channel 5* looks. Enix has recently released *Bust-A-Move Dance Summit 2001* for PS2 in Japan, which was also given the big thumbs up by Japanese gaming press, and this next project should see the developer receive similar plaudits in the US and Australia.

So what's *Britney's Dance Beat* all about? The game puts you in the role of one of five hot but hopeful dancers (choose from Rob, Elna, Carla, Dan or Enrique) who must successfully perform a series of dance auditions before earning the right to accompany Ms Spears on stage for an upcoming tour. Pull the right moves to the likes of *Baby One More Time*, *I'm A Slave 4 U*, and *Overprotected* and you'll open up video clips, backstage footage and, for the first time in a video game, DVD technology that allows users to take control of the vision during a live scene. For example,

picture yourself in the middle of an actual crowd at a concert (some of you will need to try harder than others), then with a controller it's possible to rotate the view through a full 360 degrees all while the scene is playing, including zooming in and out to see all the action from whatever angle you choose.

Britney looks great in the game, wearing various outfits including green hipsters and that red bra one-sleeve affair. As part of the various levels you'll also see the music videos to the songs you dance to, playing on billboards in the background. Sadly, Britney is off limits in the game, as you can't select her. However when you complete the game - well, we won't spoil it for you, but think bonuses....

Gameplay-wise, Enix has improved on *Bust-A-Move*. Yes, you still press buttons in time to the music but instead of the symbols scrolling down á la Konami's *Dancing Stage* game, they appear on a transparent revolving wheel that allows for clearer screens and solid two-player action. Beat your mate, and effects start to appear over your opponent's wheel, putting them off. Best of all (or so it was alleged by certain willing and able members of the *OPS2* team at the Editor's Day), the game also works a treat with a standard dance mat - expect THQ to release a game & mat bundle package (as with Ubi Soft's *The Jungle Book: Groove Party*) when the game is released.

Surprisingly, the princess of pop herself has had quite a lot to do with the development of the game, and her squeaky clean image and faultless stage show experience will definitely have a major effect on how the final product turns out. Particularly when it comes to hair. Having played the title, *OPS2* can confirm that it plays as good as it looks - and it looks just great.

Does this hair make my bum look big?

The camera will sometimes focus only on you.

Live video footage plays in the behind you.

Carla

Elisa
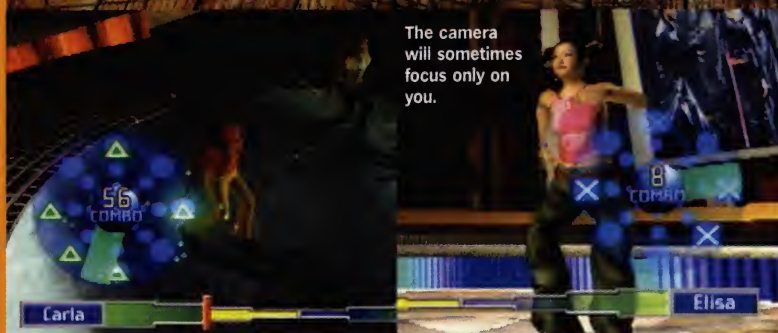
LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU WITH PLAYSTATION2

IF YOU'RE READING this and you still don't own the worlds most popular games console because you're tight on funds, not only is it likely you muscled this magazine off a mate, but you're the type that's still waiting anxiously for the right time to take the plunge and purchase your own console. Well, as they say in late night TV infomercials, 'there has never been a better time than now to buy one'.

Sony Computer Entertainment Australia has launched an innovative add-on bundle for the PS2, dubbed the Entertainment Pack. While there's no doubt most prospective owners are looking to enjoy endless hours of high speed scrapes, covert military operations, and cinematic adventure games, many are also into other forms of entertainment. So for those planning on using the PS2 well after they're all done gaming, the Entertainment Pack is the ideal entry in the exciting world of DVD movies.

Now to save you doing the sums, that all comes to the princely total of $163.65. But by grabbing yourself a new PlayStation2 console right now at the new low price of $499.95, you have the option at the time of purchase of also adding the PS2 Entertainment Pack to your purchase for only $30.00 extra. Let us do the sums for you once again: that's a total of $529.95 for the two, and a super saving of over $130.00. Now, if we could just convince them to also throw in a Sony wide screen digital TV for an extra $30 on top.

So what's packed in the Entertainment Pack?
- Official PlayStation 2 DVD Remote Control and software upgrade. Lets you enjoy the fully options you get from a stand alone DVD player, such as search functions, three different search speeds, and all basic DVD commands. RRP $49.95
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HALF-PRICE GAMES

Tha's some Maaad trix!

Roast human and potatoes for Sunday dinner.
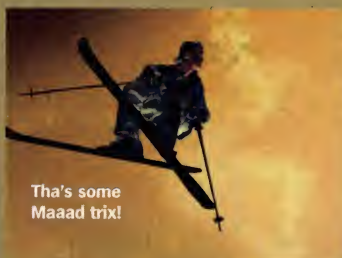
ONLY A COUPLE OF days after this issue goes on sale, you'll be able to buy some quality PS2 games at a bargain basement price of $49.95 each. First out of the gate is Jonny Moseley and his Mad Trix, on sale from March 29. The Olympic champion is lending his name to the first ever PS2 free, or 'new school' skiing game where tricking is the aim of the game.

Also on March 29 comes *Dragon Rage*, a game of Orcs and Dragons where refreshingly the player assumes the role of one of the fire-breathing beasties. As Cael the dragon, you're tasked with stopping the Orcs before they stop you and all your brethren, permanently.

Then on April 12, we have *Shifters*, a game of artefacts, shape-shifting and righting the world's wrongs. Kept barely separate from our own peaceful (yeah, right) world is one of chaos and evil. Your mission is to recover an artefact that has the power to act as a portal between your world and the utterly horrid one before the strange-looking creations of flesh, steel and steam that have suddenly begun to appear take over. Good thing you've just discovered an ability to shape-shift, because you're the hero and it's your job to solve this new-found paradox. *High Heat Baseball 2003* rounds out the 3DO titles on offer, also out April 12.

EIDOS GETS FRESH

A RECENT DECISION by U.K. game makers Eidos Interactive and local software distributor Ozisoft saw us take one step closer to taste testing a sample of what Japanese gamers have been enjoying for years; that is, many of the video games created specifically for the Japanese market. As most of you know, a large percentage of these games don't make it out of the land of the rising sun, simply because they're often considered too bizarre to ever sell well enough throughout the rest of the world.

As part of a new boutique label which Eidos is branding *Fresh Games*, we can now look forward to a selection of high-quality Japanese game titles. The *Fresh Games* lineup is expected to launch this coming spring with 3 big titles - *Mr. Moskeeto*, *Mad Maestrol*, and *Legaia 2: Duel Saga*, sequel to the 300,000-plus unit selling *Legend of Legaia*. All three games have been developed by SCEi (Sony Computer Entertainment) for the PlayStation 2.

Here's a quick peek at what to expect when they arrive.

Mr Moskeeto, originally released as *KA* in Japan, is an action game with a sting.

You play as a mosquito, with the objective of continually tormenting a Japanese family every summer by sucking as much of their blood as possible in order to survive the cold winter. You'll need to confront the daily life-and-death battles with various members of the Japanese family who are determined to rid themselves of the mosquito.

Mad Maestrol, originally released as *Bravo Music* in Japan, is a music/action title. You take on the role of an orchestra conductor tasked with saving the town's concert hall from being destroyed by showing the city the orchestra's great performances. Players must accurately press buttons as indicated on the game screen in a rhythmical pattern in order to pass each stage.

Legaia 2: Duel Saga is the follow-up to *Legend of Legaia*, a martial-arts themed 3D role-playing game featuring a highly original battle system. You must create attacks by linking together different styles of hits directed at your enemies. When certain combinations of attacks are linked together, powerful, magic-based attacks are formed.

Traditional Japanese red bean cake.

30 DAYS IN TOKYO

DAY 1 (20 JANUARY)
A very kind friend lends me his US PS2 and *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Perfection.

DAY 7
Buy an airgun replica. Now I've got a P228 Polizei. Ho, ho, ho.

DAY 17
Two interviews are slated for tomorrow at Capcom's Osaka office. I take the Bullet train down to check out the city and head straight for Dotombori, the 'eat street' made famous in *Black Rain*. Yes, that cool techy building and the huge Glico neon sign are still there. Giant crabs (complete with moving legs) or mascots of one kind or another adorn restaurant facades and shopfronts, in a concentration rare for Tokyo. All goes well until I arrive at my lodgings: the Japanese-style inn turns out to be in a dodgy area of town. At bedtime, the noise starts outside. To top things off, the traditional Japanese pillow feels like a brick. I barely sleep.

DAY 18
Check out at 10am and feel terrible. Capcom's R&D building is the tallest in the block, a marble monolith. Two canoes rest against the windows of the interview lounge, gifts to the R&D head honcho Okamoto-san. Chat with Keiji Inafune, as well as Noritaka Funamizu and Makoto Ishii about *Auto Modellista*. What nice chaps. Return to Tokyo. And a comfy bed.

DAY 24
Attend an *Onimusha 2* completion event. Included in the press pack: traditional red bean cakes. Delicious. Grab a copy of *Ico* on the way home. Which turns out to be a very bad game to play when you've got pressing deadlines. It's utterly brilliant! Force. Myself. To. Turn. PS2. Off.

DAY 25
Space Channel 5 Part 2 launches. I can hear Ulala beckoning from local game shop Wondergoo. Sorry, but you'll just have to wait until the weekend…

Row upon row of Japanese gaming goodness. Including *Soul Calibur 2*...

CLASH OF THE TITANS

Soul Calibur 2 debuts at Tokyo arcade show.

THE WAIT HAS been excruciating: a screenshot here, a snippet of video there. But at Makuhari Messe's Tokyo Amusement Expo, Namco finally unveiled its hotly anticipated *Soul Calibur 2* in playable arcade form. Although incomplete, it was nevertheless stunning. Seven of twelve characters were available, including newcomers Yunsung (wielding a Chinese broadsword) and Sophitia's sister Cassandra. Mitsurugi, Nightmare, Astaroth, Taki and Ivy made up the rest of the challengers. All were impeccably modelled and lightsourced, taking into account the beautiful fireworks issuing from clashing weapons. Naturally, their hair and garments were smoothly animated.

The stages were equally jaw-dropping. Cherry blossoms gently fluttered down at the gate of a Japanese castle. Sunlight streamed through the mouth of a cave that had been converted into a secret pirate hideout, complete with a massive

(and impressively detailed) ship moored by the far wall. A central platform surrounded by a chasm served as the arena within the ruins of a temple. The action was fast and intense – you'd walk away from a round buzzing with adrenaline.

It was one of the few 'standard' games in a show notable for exotic cabinets. Namco's *Turret Tower* required players to blast enemies while spinning around 360° in an enclosed unit (bring a sick bag). With a plastic sword, ancient Japanese monsters became slashing fodder in *Mazan: Flash Of The Blade* (Namco). Taito served up *Rising Ping Pong* with paddles; punters rode a surfboard as they carved waves in Sega's *Soul Surfer*. A surfing champ on stage even claimed it was better than the real thing. Surely not? ☐ **AW**

*Soul Calibur 2 is out on PS2 in Japan before the end of the year, and Australia in January 2003.

SPACE CHANNEL 5 PART 2

"Michael dances in space! Ulala saves the Universe!" says the billboard poster for United Game Artists' latest slice of science fiction dance hysteria, *Space Channel 5 Part 2*. Now two people can play co-operatively: one managing the D-pad, the other the buttons. Clear the Ulala Dance mode without making a mistake and you can acquire new costumes, too. The game will also be compatible with *Rez*'s funky trance-vibrator.

Get your intergalactic freak on and save the universe with Michael.

GALERIANS: ASH

Enterbrain's prequel to the PSone's *Galerians* proves once again that self-aware computers *always* spell trouble. It's 2522, and with haughty delusions of God-like grandeur, Michelangelo City's automated administrator Dorothy has decided to create her own world, populating it with servile yet psychically enhanced beings called Galerians. But when the computer's creator Dr Steiner learns of this, he writes a virus program for daughter Lilia and Rion to stop the megalomaniacal CPU in her tracks. Naturally, a battle with the Galerians and their 'mother' ensues. But then things go south when Rion encounters his double, who claims that the protagonist himself is a Galerian with implanted human memories. It's tough being a hero…

japanese top10

Sangokushi Senki beats off its rivals for the top spot.

1. **SANGOKUSHI SENKI** (KOEI)
2. **VIRTUA FIGHTER 4** (SEGA)
3. **SAMURAI** (SPIKE)
4. **SPACE CHANNEL 5 PART 2** (SEGA)
5. **FINAL FANTASY INTERNATIONAL** (SQUARE)
6. **GRANDIA XTREME** (ENIX)
7. **ROMANCE OF THREE KINGDOMS VIII** (KOEI)
8. **MOMOTAROU DENTEI X** (HUDSON)
9. **WORLD SOCCER WINNING ELEVEN 5 FINAL EVOLUTION** (KONAMI)
10. **SHIN SANGOKU MUSOU 2** (KOEI)

Chart source: Dengeki Feb 11-17

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL ANIME FAIR

Stage shows. Merchandise for sale. Huge crowds. This was a celebration of animation at the Big Site Convention Centre. Over a hundred companies attended, with Namco's stand drawing particular attention for its *Xevious* CG animation (only a poster, though – what a tease). Meanwhile, a new *Astro Boy* anime boasted English dialogue with Japanese subtitles, but the award for coolest display had to go to the life-sized Eagle Ken from *Gatchaman* (aka Mark from *Battle Of The Planets*).

Mark from *Battle Of The Planets*.

Complex plot, but enjoyable fighting.

Polaroid i-zone

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EVERYONE KNOWS THAT Polaroid instant photos are heaps of fun, but what do you do while you're waiting for the shots to develop? Get your fortune told, that's what! Thanks to mysterious gypsy magic trapped beneath every single layer of *I-Zone* Fortune film (not really), the developing photo actually tells your fortune while you wait!

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ops2@derwenthoward.com.au (subject: Polaroid compo)
or **Derwent Howard Pty. Ltd,**
P.O.Box 1037, Bondi Junction.

"Scooby-Dooby-Doo, where are you?" He's here. Obviously.

SCOOBY-DOO! NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS

Zoinks! *Scooby-Doo* bounds onto PS2 this year.

2002 LOOKS SET TO BE a big year for everyone's favourite ghost busting Great Dane, Scooby-Doo and his cartoon chums. Since the late 60's, Scooby and his four teen-aged sleuths--Fred, Daphne, Velma, and Shaggy have been searching out supernatural phenomena in their van, the Mystery Machine, and all the while providing the world with its much needed Saturday morning cartoon fix.

Along with Scooby-Doo's first big screen appearance due sometime this winter which stars amongst others, Matthew Lillard (Shaggy), Sarah Michelle Gellar (Daphne), the loveable mutt is also heading to a PS2 near you. *Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights* draws on the classic Scooby-Doo cartoon series that features a likeable cast of characters and mysterious masked villains. The game's misadventures will center on the whole Mystery, Inc. gang being kidnapped as part of a sinister plan by the game's evil mastermind. Upon your fortunate escape as Scooby, the main aim is to work out how to free your four buddies. Then it's clue hunting you go across 12 specially created levels within four worlds based on the classic cartoons. In typical paranormal style, the levels will include a creepy mansion, a spooky cave and a ghostly graveyard. Through it all, Scooby will still has time to pick up Scooby Snacks and a host of other special power-ups to aid in the demise of the villain's evil plans. Other game features to look forward to are the voice talents of some of the original cartoon cast, plus secret areas and bonus DVD features. *Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights* will arrive on PlayStation 2 first and is due for release this winter around the same time as the movie. How convenient.

Thankfully, *Scooby-Doo* will be based on the original cartoon, hence the emphasis on 'spooky' and his muttly ways.

Most antincipited
game? Spiderman.

RELEASE SCHEDULE

APRIL

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
Tiger USA Tour 2002	PS2	Sports	EA
FIFA 2002 World Cup	PS2	Sports	EA
EndGame	PS2	Shooter	Red Ant
Antz Racing	PS2	Racing	Red Ant
Tennis Masters Series:	PS2	Sports	Red Ant
Master Rallye	PS2	Racing	Red Ant
Blood Omen 2	PS2	Adventure	OZISOFT
Deus Ex	PS2	Adventure	OZISOFT
TD Overdrive	PS2	Racing	OZISOFT
Alex Ferguson's Player Manager 2002	PS1	Sports	UBISOFT
H2 Overdrive	PS2	Sports	UBISOFT
Legend Of Alon D'Ar	PS2	RPG	UBISOFT
Morrhuhn	PS1	Adventure	UBISOFT

MAY

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
F1 2002	PS2	Racing	EA
Freekstyle	PS2	Extreme	EA
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	PS2	Racing	EA
Medal of Honor: Front line	FPS	Action	EA
Spider-man: The Movie	PS2	Action	ACTIVISION
Rally Championship	PS2	Racing	OZISOFT
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	PS2	Sports	OZISOFT
Soldier Of Fortune Gold	PS2	Shooter	OZISOFT
Star Trek Voyager : Elite Force	PS2	Shooter	OZISOFT
Stuntman	PS2	Action	OZISOFT
Austin Powers Pinball	PS2	Puzzle	TAKE 2
Skateboarding Game	PS2	Extreme	TAKE 2
Trophy Chase (aka: Hunting)	PS2	Shooter	TAKE 2
Mafia	PS2	Action	TAKE 2
NGT (Roland Garros - US Open)	PS2	Sports	TAKE 2
Monster Jam - Maximum Destruction	PS2	Action	UBISOFT
Pamela Anderson In V.I.P.	PS2	Action	UBISOFT
Ultimate Fighting Championship	PS2	Sports	UBISOFT
Britney's Dance Beat	PS2	Dance Sim	THQ

JUNE

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	PS2	Extreme	ACTIVISION
Open Kart	PS2	Racing	RED ANT
Taz Wanted	PS2	Action	OZISOFT
Jimmy White's Cueball World	PS2	Sports	OZISOFT
Conflict Desert Storm	PS2	Shooter	OZISOFT
V8 Supercars	PS2	Racing	OZISOFT
Prisoner Of War	PS2	Adventure	OZISOFT
V Rally 3	PS2	Racing	OZISOFT
Spec Ops 2	PS2	Action	TAKE 2
Spec Ops: Airborne	PS1	Action	TAKE 2
4 x 4 Evolution 2	PS2	Racing	TAKE 2
Austin Powers	PS2	Adventure	TAKE 5
Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius	PS2	Arcade	THQ

JULY

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
Serious Sam	PS1	Shooter	TAKE 2
Black Dahlia	PS2	Adventure	TAKE 2
Simpsons Skateboarding	PS2	Arcade	EA

AUGUST

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
Tenchu 3	PS2	Action	ACTIVISION

SEPTEMBER

TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
Celebrity Deathmatch	PS1	Action	TAKE 2
Celebrity Deathmatch	PS2	Action	TAKE 2
Iron Storm	PS2	Action	TAKE 2
The Curse	PS2	Adventure	TAKE 2
Transworld Surfing	PS2	Extreme	OZISOFT
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	PS2	Extreme	ACTIVIISION
Race of Champions	PS2	Racing	ACTIVIISION
X-Men Next Dimension	PS2	Action	ACTIVIISION
Street Hoops	PS2	Sports	ACTIVIISION

PSone Top 20

RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
01	HARRY POTTER & PHILOSOPHER	PS1	ADVENTURE	EA
02	MONSTERS INC	PS1	ADVENTURE	DISNEY
03	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3	PS1	SPORTS	ACTIVISION
04	WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?	PS1	FAMILY	EIDOS
05	SYPHON FILTER 3	PS1	ADVENTURE	989 STUDIOS
06	FIFA 2002	PS1	SPORTS	EA
07	DIGIMON	PS1	RPG	INFOGRAMES
08	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2	PS1	SPORTS	ACTIVISION
09	SPIDERMAN ENTER ELECTRO	PS1	ADVENTURE	ACTIVISION
10	20 GAMES PACK	PS1	COMPILATION	MIDAS
11	FINAL FANTASY IX	PS1	RPG	INFOGRAMES
12	NICKTOONS RACING	PS1	RACING	INFOGRAMES
13	ISS PRO EVOLUTION	PS1	SPORTS	KONAMI
14	SCOOBY DOO CYBER CHASE	PS1	ADVENTURE	THQ
15	100% STAR	PS1	ALL OTHER	EIDOS
16	NBA LIVE 2002 GOLD	PS1	SPORTS	EA
17	TOCA WORLD TOURING CARS	PS1	RACING	CODEMASTERS
18	POWER RANGERS TIME FORCE	PS1	ACTION	THQ
19	TIME CRISIS PROJECT TITAN	PS1	ACTION	NAMCO
20	METAL GEAR SOLID PTM	PS1	ADVENTURE	KONAMI

PS2 Top 20

RANK	TITLE	PLATFORM	MODNAME	PUBLISHER
1	GRAND THEFT AUTO 3	PS2	ADVENTURE	TAKE 2
2	GRAN TURISMO 3	PS2	RACING	SONY
3	STATE OF EMERGENCY	PS2	ADVENTURE	TAKE 2
4	ACE COMBAT DISTANT THUNDER	PS2	SIMULATOR	NAMCO
5	TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT	PS2	ACTION	NAMCO
6	CRICKET 2002	PS2	SPORTS	EA
7	MAX PAYNE	PS2	ACTION	TAKE 2
8	HEADHUNTER	PS2	ADVENTURE	SEGA
9	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3	PS2	SPORTS	ACTIVISION
10	DEVIL MAY CRY	PS2	ACTION	CAPCOM
11	WWF SMACKDOWN!	PS2	SPORTS	THQ
12	JAMES BOND AGENT UNDER FIRE PS	PS2	ACTION	EA
13	CRASH BAND 5: WRATH/CORTEX	PS2	ADVENTURE	VIVENDI
14	WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	PS2	RACING	SONY
15	JAK & DAXTER PRECURSOR LEGACY	PS2	ADVENTURE	NAUGHTY DOG
16	BALDURS GATE DARK ALLIANCE	PS2	RPG	INTERPLAY
17	DROPSHIP - UNITED PEACE	PS2	SIMULATOR	SONY
18	SUNNY GARCIA SURFING	PS2	SPORTS	UBI SOFT
19	F1 2001	PS2	RACING	EA
20	TIME CRISIS 2	PS2	ACTION	NAMCO

Shrapnel impact at 600+mph.
Mon Calamari.

Swapping paint with Skywalker.
Tatooine.

Turbo-boost slice between canyon wall and Oud Bolt.
Sullust.

PlayStation 2

SPY

GAMES 2 MOVIES

Do you want popcorn to go with that game sir?

IT'S NO LONGER ground breaking news to hear of movies being made into video games, and just like novels that fail to translate to the big screen, often the games don't live up to the hype of their box office blockbusters. But whether they hit or miss, the constant flow of Hollywood to console conversions continues. Here's just a sample of what's on the way before the year is out.

Still suffering short term memory loss from the original MiB movie? Then prepare for the bright white lights once again, as *Men in Black II the movie* arrives in July this year. Following in close tow will also be Infogrames' PS2 game based on the franchise. *Men in Black 2: Alien Escape* will feature the familiar agents, Jay and Kay as they hunt down alien criminals hiding out on Earth. We can expect similar snappy one-liners from the characters, along with weird conspiracy theories and humorous situations. The third-person adventure being developed locally by Melbourne House is divided into five distinct episodes, including a nuclear station, the docks and the streets of Manhattan. All episodes include various levels and challenges to complete prior to progressing through the game. A key feature of the gameplay will allow players to select either Jay, the athletic, reckless fast-talker, or Kay, the confident veteran at the start of each level. While Jay moves at a faster pace, Kay's knowledge of weapons gives him a higher weapon damage and health bar. Allowing players to switch between characters offers the opportunity to experiment with various weapons and character strengths, adding variety to the gameplay. Just imagine, Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones in the one game; one almost wishes it was a multiplayer first-person shooter.

In the weeks prior to the release of one of the Christmas holiday's biggest movies, *The Lord of the Rings*, Electronic Arts announced an exclusive deal to create games based on all three *Lord of the Rings* movies. Written by J.R.R Tolkien, the classic literary works being made into movies are *The Fellowship of the Ring* (out now), followed by *The Two Towers* (due in spring 2002) and *The Return of the King* (due in 2003). EA's first game will arrive in conjunction with the release of the trilogy's second movie, *The Two Towers*. This action/ adventure game will lead players through the roles of the key action heroes from the movies. As Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, players will take on the likes of Orcs and other memorable movie monsters, with the aid of other members of the Fellowship. The game will feature dramatic camera views of the action within fully 3D interactive environments taken straight from the big screen. A visceral, tactical combat system will encourage players to be strategic with their selection of characters, weaponry and moves. While a number of titles based on New Line's *The Lord of the Rings* license are currently in development for next generation systems, we can expect to see this first game released at the same time as the second movie in spring this year.

With a worldwide license in one hand and a number of decent Marvel super hero games in the other, Activision is aiming to release a tie-in game on PS2 for the upcoming Spider-Man movie in June this year. Imaginatively titled, *Spider-Man: The Movie Game*, the mission is to thwart the maniacal plans of mastermind criminal the Green Goblin and his legions of evil. New aerial combat, in-air control, and free-roaming capabilities are just some of the many enhancements due when the game debuts on PS2 in a few months' time.

The PS2's grunt makes *MIB* on PSone look archaic.
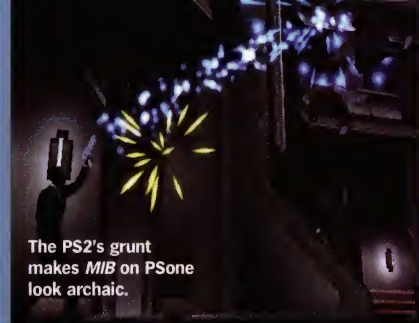
No, this isn't a scene from your in-laws' family reunion...

Actually re-live the Orc scene - definitely one of the most impressive in the *LOTR* movie.

In *LOTR*, you'll have a choice of playable characters. Go Orc hunting with Strider!

Spidey is actually able to make lycra look good. Lucky git.
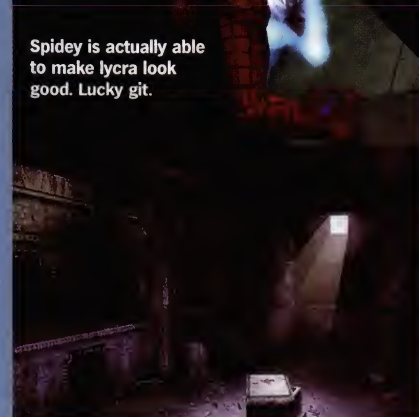
Mizuguchi-san doesn't usually get too much time to party.

Posing with the game that made him famous.
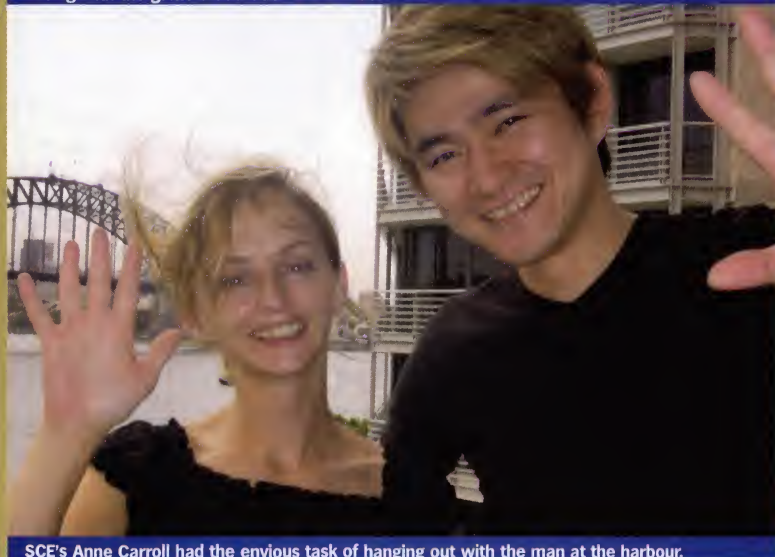
SCE's Anne Carroll had the envious task of hanging out with the man at the harbour.

TETSUYA MIZUGUCHI

We talk to *Sega Rally*'s dad about his new musical direction.

STARTING OUT WITH CG movie productions, this man went on to create *Sega Rally Championship*, *Manx TT* and *Sega Touring Car Championship* before his need for speed subsided Now the circle is complete and Tetsuya Mizuguchi is back with a message of love carried by hot CG babe Ulala.

So we all know you're the man when it comes to racing games. What made you leave those behind and start making music-based stuff? No longer a speed freak?

I love racing, especially cars. But I've also always loved music, so I put the music in the Touring Car games, techno, house and all that..

But what inspired Ulala and the *Space Channel 5* universe?

It seemed natural for me. I was involved in racing games for five years. To be honest, I got bored. They're fun, you know, but you can't put any kind of message into racing games, or real drama. I wanted to make a game with a message, that said something to the player.

Right, you've been quoted as saying that you want to "spread love and happiness throughout the Galaxy".

(Laughs) What?! Where?

Right here, look (shows press release). It says you want to bring love and happiness with *Space Channel 5* part two. But don't you shoot and kill aliens in the game? That's not exactly spreading love and happiness, is it?

Ha ha, well you don't shoot them. You just send them back to their home planet. There's no killing, no blood, nothing like that.

All right then, on to the music. How do you go about selecting the right kind of music for *Space Channel 5* and *REZ*?

Well it's not just me. We have 25 staff on *Space Channel 5*, for example. Everybody talks, shares ideas, and so on. Someone just found 'Mexican Flyer', the theme tune to the game. It's not a movie theme, or a TV theme. I

contacted the music company handling the tune and asked them if I could use it. They were very surprised. The writer is, I think, about 70 years old now (Ed note: he's Ken Woodman, who had a hit with the song from the 1966 album, 'That's Nice'). I think it's great that his music has found an audience again in a medium that's so high tech and modern.

So how is the new game different from the previous installment? What's new?

Everything! It's basically the same game play but there's a whole lot more entertainment and drama in the game. It's really a totally different experience. There's much more sense of drama and I hope the player will get far more involved in the game. And there's a 2-player mode, of course.

Speaking of getting involved in the game, how did you get Michael Jackson on board?

About a month before the game was finalized, I got a call from the U.S. One of our producers had gone there, met Michael's managers and showed him a 60-70% complete version of the game. I then got a call from one of Michael's producers who said he wanted to act in it. This was very good news. We all thought, "how do we use Michael in the game?' then decided we should create a scene where Michael is forced to dance by the aliens and the player can save Michael. That way, the player gets very involved. We wanted to use more of Michael this time, in part two, so now he's a boss. He dances a lot more, sings more...

What's next for you? Another music game? Don't you think that gamers are getting a bit tired of the genre?

No, not at all. I think there is a lot more to do. But, personally, I do want to move on to the next thing, perhaps make an adventure game. Games are games, not movies, but we need to drive people's emotions more in our games, make them more involving and dramatic. I want to make people cry!

WORDS: DEAN EVANS/PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN BURTON

Warren Spector

More than simply 'the bloke behind *Deus Ex*', Ion Storm's Warren Spector is one of the games industry's leading lights. And once you get him started, there's no stopping him…

"The challenge of learning a new platform didn't allow us the luxury of including a multiplayer option"

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Warren Spector

Job title: President of Ion Storm's Austin office

Born: New York, USA

Background: Graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois (BS in Speech) and the University of Texas (MA in Radio-TV-Film)

Previous jobs:
Steve Jackson Games – Co-editor of *Space Gamer, Fantasy Gamer* and *Fire & Movement* magazines. Developed *TOON* (award-winning role-playing game).

TSR Inc – Developer. Contributed to RPGs: *Top Secret/S.I, Rocky & Bullwinkle s Party; Buck Rogers Battle For the 25th Century* boardgame and *The AD&D 2nd Edition Dungeon Masters Guide.*

Origin Systems – Co-producer of PC titles *Ultima VI* and *Wing Commander*. Producer of *Bad Blood, Martian Dreams* and the *Ultima Underworld* series of fantasy RPGs. Also co-developed: *Ultima VII, Part 2: Serpent Isle, System Shock* and *Wings Of Glory.*

Looking Glass Technologies – Oversaw multiplayer title *Junction Point* (never completed) and *Thief* series of RPGs.

Ion Storm – Created Ion Storm with Tom Hall and John Romero. Made *Dominion, Daikatana, Deus Ex* and *Ananchronox.* Currently working on *Deus Ex 2* and *Thief 3.*

Miscellaneous: Married to Caroline Spector, author of several fantasy novels. He writes semi-regularly on the subject of game design and development for a variety of magazines and Web sites; owns many books and lives for basketball. He also plays rhythm guitar in the band Wasted Youth.

What Warren Spector doesn't know about videogames is probably not worth knowing. From his 'paper' RPG days at Steve Jackson Games and TSR Inc, to the e-RPG stints at Origin Systems and LookingGlass, he has built up a wealth of design experience. All of this knowledge coalesces in *Deus Ex*, 2001's PC Game of the Year and now making its appearance on Sony's black box. This month, Warren Spector talks to *OPS2* about the challenges in bringing his free-form, cinematic 3D adventure to PS2.

Deus Ex has been described in various quarters as a revolutionary FPS. Do you think so? And if so, in what ways?
Well, first of all, I don't think of *Deus Ex* as a first-person shooter. It's a first-person game, sure, and you can shoot, yes, but it's not *about* shooting. It's about letting players decide who their character is and how he interacts with the game world. It's as much a role-playing game as it is a shooter. And as much a strategy game as it is an RPG. And as much an adventure game as it is a strategy game…

What we have done is combine elements of a variety of game styles in ways no-one has done before. *Deus Ex* allows players to pick their play style in a world rich enough to allow them to craft their own unique experience. It isn't a game about how clever *we* are as designers but about how clever *you* are as a player. That shouldn't be revolutionary but a lot of people clearly think it is.

Is there anything that you are really pleased with in Deus Ex?
The interface is one of the high points for me. But, really, the thing I'm most happy about is that we were able to bring the entire *Deus Ex* experience to PS2 owners. We made very few compromises. The game isn't 'dumbed down' or 'more action oriented' as many pundits told us it would have to be. Bringing multiple game-of-the-year-award gameplay to an entirely new audience was our primary goal and the team worked very hard to make that happen. As far as I'm concerned, they succeeded admirably.

What, if anything, did you have to leave out of the game?
The only thing I can think of that we left out of the PS2 version is the laser sight weapon modification. And, frankly, we pulled that out because it never worked the way we wanted it to in the PC version and we *should* have cut it there, too! Oh, and we left out a bunch of interface screens – you can now access most of the game's critical functions right from the main game screen instead of having to wade through a bunch of menus.

Is there anything that you wish you could have added to the game?
I almost hesitate to say this, because it'll probably ignite a firestorm, but I wish we could have gotten Multiplayer mode into the PS2 version. We did an experimental Deathmatch mode for the *DX* Game of the Year edition on PC and it really didn't feel like any other multiplayer experience out there – all of our character differentiation stuff worked great in a multiplayer setting. Realistically, though, the challenge of learning a new platform and preserving and enhancing the single-player experience on the PS2 just didn't allow us the luxury of including multiplayer.

Do you think that the PS2 version of Deus Ex is a better, all-round game than the PC incarnation?
In many ways, the PS2 version of *Deus Ex* is the better version. I'm really happy with the more streamlined control scheme and interface. And we got a chance to go back and fix some maps that didn't quite play the way we hoped they would. We were able to do some additional balancing on the weapons, so the combat is more satisfying. It's just a bit more refined in a lot of ways than the PC version was. No big surprise – we *knew* what game we were making this time around. With the PC version of *Deus Ex*, a lot of time went into figuring out what the heck we were doing!

How long did the PlayStation 2 version take the team to complete and what have you all learned during the PS2 development process of Deus Ex?
The PS2 version of *Deus Ex* took a little more than a year. We didn't just slap it on a new platform and hope it all worked. We redesigned the interface from scratch. We upped the quality of the characters and animations. We redid all the cinematics. We reworked the geometry, NPC/item placement and lighting on every single map to address player input and the needs of the new platform.

What did we learn? I think we learned how rigorous you need to be when you work on a console game. PC developers haven't had to worry about a couple of K of RAM in a decade or more. On the PS2, every bit of memory is precious. And dealing with saved games when you don't have a hard drive was a challenge, too. We learned a ton that'll stand us in good stead in the multiplatform future!

Do you think that game designers are becoming lazy, in that there s a lack of originality in the industry at the moment?
No way would I say game developers are lazy! Making games is insanely hard. No-one I know sets out to make a bad or unoriginal game. It's just that the risks associated with development are so great these days, the amount of money you spend is so astronomic (relative to what it used to cost…) there's a tendency to want to do stuff that you already know works. That's not laziness. That's self-preservation. Having said that, I do wish developers would take more chances – and that publishers would fund the risk-takers a little more freely. And having said that, I think you just have to look to games like *Grand Theft Auto 3* and the *Tony Hawk* series or titles like *Frequency* to see that there's plenty of innovation going on out there.

What games have you been impressed by on PS2 so far?
Well, I think I tipped my hand a bit already in my previous answer! *GTA3* rocks – it's actually not unlike *Deus Ex* in that it emphasises unique player experience above everything else. Freeform gameplay is great stuff… And *Frequency* has occupied a lot of my PS2 time recently. I have a strange fondness for *Rez*, too.

You mentioned in a recent interview with this magazine that John Romero said to you: Make the game of your dreams. Deus Ex is the result. If someone said the same thing again to you now, what sort of game would you like to make?
Hey, just wait and see! □

Warren Spector, the
man who has big
ideas and likes to talk
about them. Lots.

SPIDERMAN: THE MOVIE

CAN THE WEBBED WONDER WORK HIS MAGIC ON PS2? FIND OUT IN THIS EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

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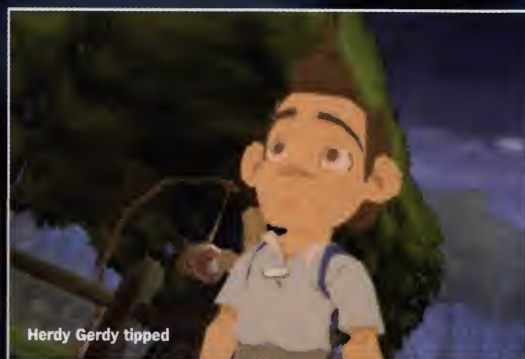
Herdy Gerdy tipped

V-Rally 3

Virtua Fighter 4
Winner

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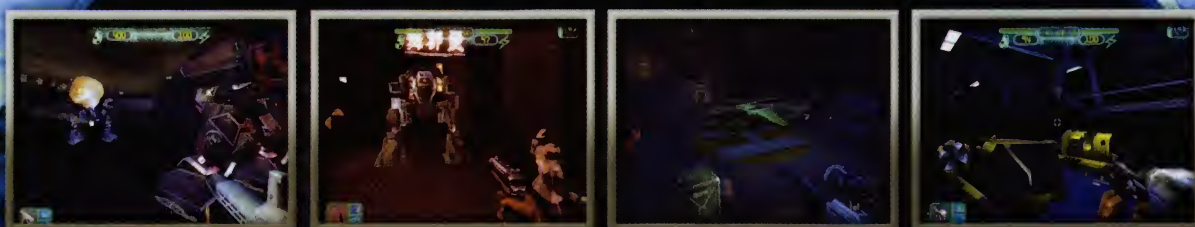
David Dienstiber just hates losing his car keys on the job. *OPS2* calmed him down eventually.

TEXT: PAUL ROSE/PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN BURTON

TYRANNOSAURUS WRECKS!

Turok the dinosaur hunter will soon charge onto PS2, so we went to Acclaim's Kensington studios armed with Cerebral Bore and dictaphone to unearth the prehistoric future prequel, *Turok Evolution*. Read on…

It is unlikely that even the most dedicated PlayStation veteran will not have heard the name 'Turok'. After the legendary *GoldenEye*, the Turok series was the Nintendo 64's premier (nay, only other) first-person shoot-'em-up brand. From 1997, Acclaim released no fewer than four Turok games – *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, Turok 2: Seeds Of Evil, Turok 3: Shadow Of Oblivion* and the multiplayer *Turok: Rage Wars*. All had two things in common: cyborg dinosaurs and excessive gore. A coupling that was sure to be a success.

In fact *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* was revolutionary for its time, being one of the first 'grown-up' (read: 'very violent') games to appear on a Nintendo machine. It was also the debut appearance of first-person shoot-'em-ups on any console (although FPSs had already appeared on PC).

With the excesses of the festive season now fading, we can be sure that Christmas 2002 is one to wait for with eager anticipation. For the first time ever, Turok is set to appear on a non-Nintendo-branded system – our very own PlayStation 2 – and Texas-based Acclaim Studios is pumping it full of that trademark dino-goodness, to ensure it gets us buzzing.

Turok Evolution has been in development for almost two years, and finds the titular Native American warrior return to the dinosaur-riddled alternate universe of The Lost Lands – for the first time ever. Confused? Don't be. You see, *Evolution* is a prequel to the previous games, detailing the beginnings of the conflicts that have since torn Turok's world asunder, and found him unwittingly fulfilling an ancient prophecy.

JURASSIC SPARKS FLY

The Lost Lands have never looked lovelier – or indeed more deadly. The action moves back to the original, prehistoric ethos of both the first *Turok* games and the original graphic novels (see 'A Life In Comics', over the page). Gone are the all-encompassing science-fiction overtones – giant alien insects, and so on – and in their place is a more low-tech feel.

"It's Dinotopia meets Omaha Beach," says David Dienstiber, Creative Director of Acclaim Studios, with a wicked gleam in his eye.

Rich as the plot and setting may be, all of this is really just a backdrop for plenty of prehistoric carnage. The *Turok* games are famed for their OTT violence, and *Turok Evolution* promises at least four weapons designed to do highly unpleasant things that have never before been seen in a game. Says Dienstiber: "It's pure *Turok*, man.

"If this was a finished game, you'd be seeing a massive cavity now," he reveals, as he looses a volley of hefty looking missiles into a brachiosaurus' ☑

Just look at the jaws on that – *Turok* man David Dienstiber gets pre-hysterical.

Reckon you can take out a brachiosaurus with a bow and arrow?

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Pretty as it looks, there's little time for sight-seeing.

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//Advanced AI routines mean that groups of enemy troops will act together to take you out//

→ bread-basket. Indeed Dienstiber admits that coming up with new weapon concepts was one of the hardest parts of the entire *Turok Evolution* development process, but that it was also the most rewarding.

"I think we've even managed to top the Cerebral Bore," he continues, referring to the notorious *Turok* weapon that drilled through the crania of enemies and into their brains.

AMAZING SPIDER-CAM
Another new feature to get to grips with is the novel Spider-Cam. Once deployed, you'll take direct control of the arachnid spy-cum-weapon, using it to scout out areas that are otherwise unreachable by Turok. The cam's also laden with explosives and poison gas dispensers that can be triggered at the touch of a button, so you can clear an area of unwanted company before you enter. The Spider-Cam can also be used to entice guards away from their posts… or, alternatively, to lure deadly velociraptors towards the sentries.

The development team has also striven to rationalise the inventory process. Rather than the system that previously required players to scroll through a list of weapons to find the one they wanted, each weapon will now double – or treble – as another. The basic pistol, for example, can be upgraded to a sniper rifle.

Familiar *Turok* weapons will reappear, including his trademark bow and arrow. However, players will now be equipped with a poison quiver. Fire it at an enemy, and the bad guy will become gripped with abdominal pains, before puking his guts up and eventually dying. You don't get that in *Jak And Daxter*.

THE BIRDS AND THE BEES
The Lost Lands are richly detailed, and packed with gently swaying trees and plants that react as you walk through them. They're alive with indigenous life – but even the most benign brachiosaurus can be deadly if you find yourself in its path. "Actually, it'll react to your behaviour," reveals David Dienstiber. "If you shoot it, it'll try and stamp on you. If you shoot it in the head, it'll fall, and you'd better hope you're not in the way, because it crushes anything it falls on."

It's the way *Turok Evolution*'s world interacts with the player – and itself – that promises to be the game's outstanding feature. As you push through dense undergrowth – never sure if there'll be a waiting raptor behind the next bush – your pace will slow. Also, you'll be making so much noise, crushing the plants, that you'll have alerted any predators before they've made eye contact.

Of course, it won't just be roaming dinosaurs who attempt to kill you. As you attempt to free The Lost Lands from the evil grip of the reptilian Lord Tyrannus, you'll also encounter his troops – some more dinosaur-like than others. *Turok Evolution* features advanced artificial intelligence routines, meaning that groups of enemy troops will act together to take you out. Kill their squad leader, however, and they may just flee.

Sometimes, though, there will be times when you get the opportunity to hook up with allied soldiers, who'll swarm around you, firing at enemies on your behalf. "We tried to bring a group dynamic to the main game, but it is mostly a solo experience," says Dienstiber.

And what an experience it promises to be. The action is almost seamless from one area to another, encompassing jungles, mountains, the depths of the ocean, besieged cities, fortress assaults and more besides.

"It's difficult to say, but I reckon it'll take a good player around 16 hours to get through the gameworld, if he's really moving," predicts Dienstiber.

"But there won't be dead space. Even if all the enemies are killed, there are still going to be free-roaming raptors, compys, and what have you. I honestly don't know exactly what's alive in there," he concludes. With a shudder… □

Like any good FPS, *Turok Evolution* boasts a sniper option.

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FLY ME TO THE MOON
Most of *Turok Evolution* is played on foot, through there will be four flying stages, where players sit astride the back of a massive winged dinosaur.

"It's not, as most people think, a pteranodon, which were actually quite small," says Dienstiber. "It's a que-something-something, I can't remember. You can look it up."

Whatever it's called, the creature is armed with rocket launchers and twin assault cannons – and apparently feels quite different to controlling an aircraft; "There are sections where it's flying vertically up or down the side of a mountain, and you can really feel and see the wind resistance," explains Dienstiber.

Some flying arenas are massive. One of them – a huge ruined temple – is more than 2km across, while one boss stage requires players to attack both on foot, and in the air.

The flying will be part of *Turok Evolution*'s multiplayer mode. In addition to the usual Deathmatch and Capture-The-Flag options, you will be able to take to the air in a series of specially designed air-to-ground and ground-to-air missions.

Rundown urban locales nestle among the vegetation.

David Dienstiber

The Creative Director of Acclaim Studios Austin has worked on all the *Turok* games to date. He flew in to the UK recently for a revealing word about agitated pigs and logs. And, as we discovered, he does like to chat.

Can you tell us bit more detail about the background of the *Turok Evolution* project?

This project's path was set about a year before *Turok 3*. We asked ourselves what next, where do we take this franchise in the future? It had become a bit too science-fiction influenced. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but I thought we were becoming too distanced from where *Turok* belonged. People had no notion of who Turok himself was, so we decided that it was time to go back to the beginning. You could say this is 'Turok Episode One'.

We know that it's still several months away, but how long has *Turok Evolution* already been in development?

The actual game's been in development for about 18 months, but we were designing the toolset for about six months before that. The toolset is really developed to be used for all our action-adventure titles. It's been a huge undertaking, but it'll make a massive difference.

The tools enable us to design the world and the gameplay, without needing finished art. We can see whether the game is fun before it looks beautiful. We're way ahead of our game, so we can test out all the elements before putting the finished artwork into it. It's like developing with broad strokes, so it won't really look beautiful until the last third of development."

What stage are you at with the development?

We've got seven months to go, but it would be impossible to put a percentage on that. The worlds are built, the gameplay is locked in, but it's not textured yet, it hasn't been optimised and the real-time lighting isn't in there. But it's all in place for us to populate the world, put the plants in and so on.

In fact, that's taking some time – we're going to have more indigenous life in *Turok Evolution* than in all the other *Turok* games put together – by a factor of about a hundred. You could ask our art guys how many species of insect are in there, and they won't be able to tell you. There are butterflies, beetles, worms, fish… they've designed so much that they've begun to lose track of it all. The world is alive. Just look at it.

So is everything set in stone, or is there still time for you to include any new ideas that you may have now?

I think with seven months to go on the project, it'd be dangerous to make changes now. We had it planned out so well from the start, that I don't think we'll need to. We've seen other games that look cool since we began, but we've got enough stuff of our own that no one has ever seen in a game before. We pretty much solidified our plans from the start.

How important is the story to the game?

Very. There's lots of storytelling, but it isn't intrusive. The action is mostly seamless, but we've got about four cut-scenes. These help further the plot, but throughout players will overhear plot-points delivered by other characters or enemies. The storytelling will be done real-time. It won't be invasive.

How do you think Turok will be accepted by PS2 owners?

For as long as we were making *Turok* games for the N64, we've always, always had a very aggressive campaign coming from PlayStation owners all requesting *Turok* for their machines. I think that these days gamers are happy to play great games, whatever the platform they're on. I think regardless of whether *Turok*'s on a Nintendo machine or not, the response will be massive. People will be thrilled with the PS2 version, I hope.

What do you think of the PS2 yourself?

I've had a PS2 from the day it came out. I'm incredibly excited about it all. There are so many great games now, and I just have to own them. I think this has been the most expensive month of my life! There are some very, very exciting games on the PS2.

How have you found developing for the PS2? Has it been a smooth process or have you come across glitches?

There haven't been any rude technological surprises. We've been working on the PS2 version since the minute we could get hold of dev kits. Admittedly, for a lot of it we've mainly been working with PCs, simply because there weren't

CANDY FOR THE EYES, SIR?

Even at this stage *Turok Evolution* promises to look amazing.

Though still some seven months from being finished, *Turok Evolution* is already looking rather lovely. The exterior locations are promising to be some of the largest ever seen, apparently stretching off for miles in every direction.

Acclaim has yet to optimise the visuals, but the finished game should be packed to the razor-sharp teeth with all manner of graphical effects, real-time lighting, realistic water, bump mapping and specular mapping. Whatever that is.

TUROK

Detailed architecture and sublime lighting go hand in hand.

G'wan – blow that dumb-ass dino's head off!

The interiors look as good as the outside world.

As the saying goes "Blue sky at night – dinosaur fight."

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TUROK, A LIFE IN COMICS

The secret origin of Turok: Son Of Stone.

It's a little known fact that Turok initially began life in comics, almost half a century ago. The ubiquitous dinosaur hunter was originally the star of an obscure Fifties comic book series, published by the Western-Gold Key Comics company.

Turok made his debut in 1954, in issue #596 of the anthology Four Color Comics. The strip left the Kiowa Indian warrior trapped in the Lost Valley, an alternate universe, ruled by prehistoric creatures. It proved popular enough that a year later, in issue #656, Turok reappeared in a try-out for a series of his own.

He proved popular enough to warrant his own book, and Turok: Son Of Stone made its debut in 1956, with – oddly – issue #3. His first issues were written by Paul S Newman (no relation) and drawn by the excellently named Rex Maxon and Alberto Giolitti. Astonishingly, given the obscurity which was to later consume the book, Turok lasted an impressive 164 issues, spanning 25 years. For its time, Turok was a ground-breaking comic, featuring, as it did, Native Americans as intelligent and heroic leading characters.

COMICS HELL

Turok remained in the wasteland of Comics Hell for over a decade, before being revived in 1993 by independent publisher Valiant Comics, after it purchased rights to several Gold Key properties. The early Nineties were a golden time for comics, and the foil-embossed debut issue of Turok Dinosaur Hunter sold an astonishing 1.7 million copies. Writer David Micheline and artist Bart Sears introduced the concept of cyborg dinosaurs to the Turok universe, and armed the character with modern weaponry.

In 1996, Valiant was swallowed up by Acclaim Entertainment, who viewed the company's comics series as potential videogame fodder. While the games arm of Acclaim worked hard on transforming the character into a shoot-'em-up star, he continued to appear in a series of quarterly comic specials and limited series, that laid the foundation for the Turok game franchise.

Alas, with Acclaim's comics publishing arm no longer active, Turok's future looks likely to remain exclusively within the realm of videogames. Here's hoping…
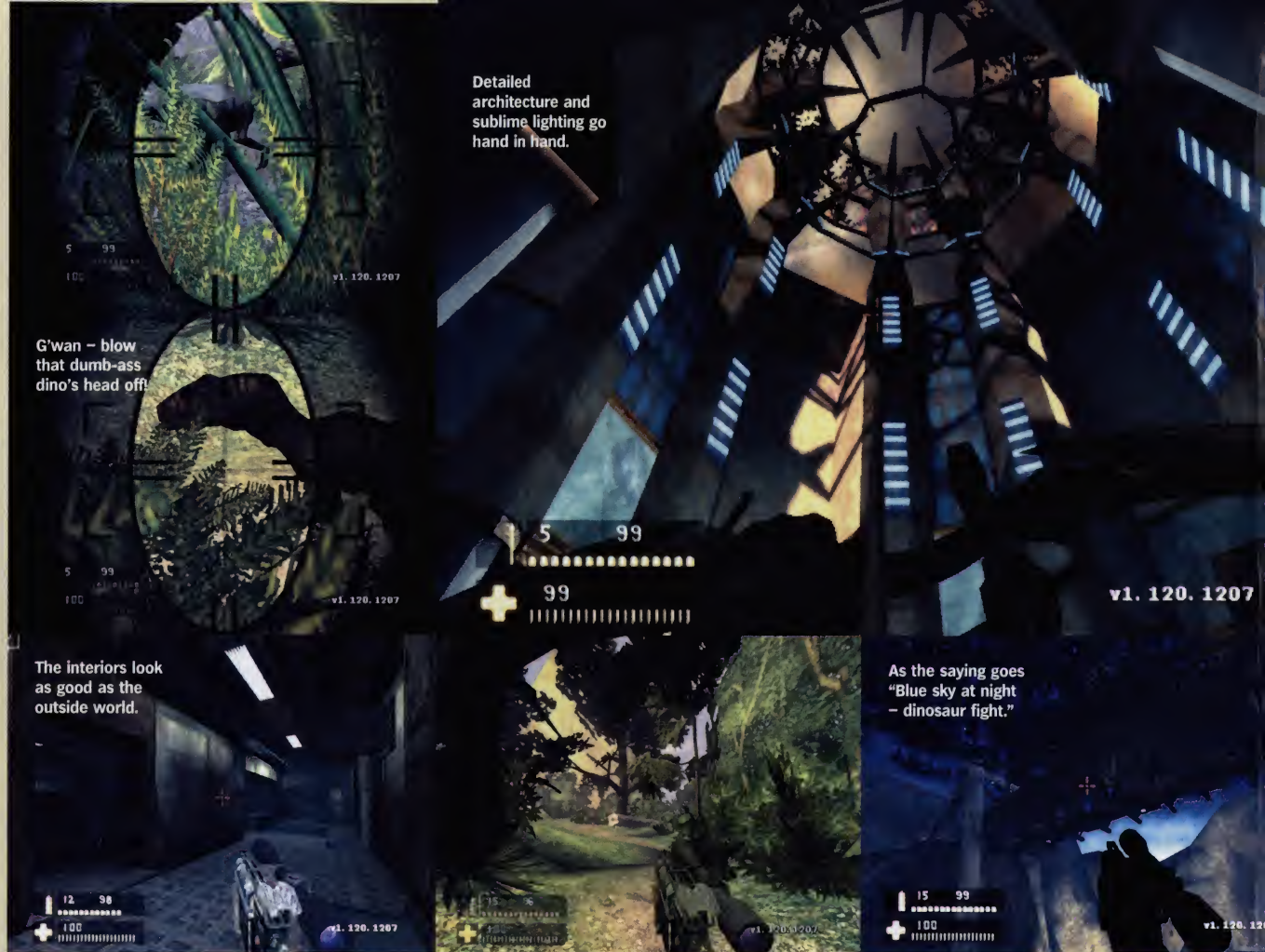
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enough kits to go around. But our tech guys are very good, so it's been pretty smooth. Even if it may kill them eventually!

What are you most pleased with about the project so far?
Overall, the dedication of the team. The art team is amazing. The designers are great. It's just incredible to see a group of people dive into a project like this, and give so much. Our audio guy has almost been arrested twice. He's a purist and doesn't want to use library sounds, so he's been going to zoos, and recording animals, layering different noises on top of each other and stuff.

Um… arrested?
He went to the zoo and asked some guy there to agitate a pig for him, so this guy was putting his foot through the bars, and kicking the pig. Then he went to a garage sale, and bought a bunch of busted weapons, and was throwing them down and recording the sounds. But, unfortunately, he chose to do it opposite a school, and someone kind of came over to find out what he was doing.

We've recorded all sorts of weapon sounds, everything from elephant guns, to .22 calibre pistols. We even bought a flare gun. We set up a garbage can, and filled it with water. We were going to shoot the flare into it, and record the noise, but it kind of did a huge arc and landed in a field of dried grass.

Suddenly there were dozens of people running everywhere with buckets of water… could've been bad. Don't record your own flare sounds, kids! But our audio guy is crazy. He jumps into rivers, pools, anything to get the right sound. The audio is downright disturbing on some levels.

What about the music?
We've got our own audio studio in Cincinnati, where our composer – a very talented guy called Nelson – is based. Right now we don't have a finished map for him to work from, and gauge the ambient feel as to whether it's night, dawn or whatever. But he has put together some awesome concept tracks. They kind of harken back to the original, but evolve their own way.

It also looks amazing. What can you tell us about the graphics?
There's so much stuff we can do now, simply because the new machines are so much more powerful. Just look at the brachiosaurus, for example. You can see it breathing, the flesh quivers as it moves – it looks real. Before we were limited with the number of bones, but now you can have more subtle motion.

Also, we'd planned to have flight in the N64 versions, but we had to scrap it, just because the engine couldn't handle it. That's not to say the N64 couldn't have done it, but it would've meant essentially developing two different games

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"Our audio guy has almost been arrested. He's been going to zoos and recording animals"

side-by-side. Now we have an engine so flexible that we can have players flying around on the back of a dinosaur with a 40-foot wingspan, in addition to all the first-person on-foot stuff.

So how do you animate an extinct creature?
Our artists – whether they're from a game, film or cel animation background – all want reference. So they go to the zoo to watch elephants, they watch the Discovery Channel and I know for a fact we've got several copies of Walking With Dinosaurs in the office. The offices are stacked with reference.

But most of all they collaborate. They might look at someone else's work, and use some of that, and they get together to share ideas. It's a pool of talent.

On a different note, how did you get started in games?
Now that's an interesting tale. I had a BA in arts, and came to realise that my definition of 'artist' was another person's definition of 'waiter'. I ended up working for an advertising agency in Houston, but after a few years I would've suffered any number of tortures rather than continue to work for them. It was all really dull contracts, like grocery chains and supermarkets.

Anyhow, my brother – who lives in Austin – sent me a little ad for a job at a company called Iguana. I put together a game concept and sent it in. I did everything from the art to the gameplay mechanics, and hoped that they might offer me a job as an artist. In fact they weren't used to such detailed proposals and offered me a design position, leading an exclusive N64 project called Turok.

It was going to be based on a Valiant comic, but they had no plan as to what form it would take. It was becoming feasible at that stage to do a console first-person shoot-'em-up, and I pushed for that. We were a team comprised of guys who'd never made a game before, but we did it. It was painful, but I think in many respects what we came up with was more impressive than Quake – which hit about 18 months into our project.

I've been revisiting the first Turok a lot over the last six months, and I thought the bosses were good, but I'd also forgotten about the logs. It brought back terrible memories of laying each of the logs down. We were really restricted with memory, so I ended up using these logs everywhere, making bridges out of them, ramps, anything. Oh, happy memories! □

MILLENCOLIN

Home From Home

NEW STUDIO ALBUM OUT NOW

The hotly anticipated follow up to the gold selling
PENNYBRIDGE PIONEERS

FEATURES THE SINGLE "KEMP" – OUT NOW

"Drop me at the end of the road…" When Sam met Colin.

DRIVING McRAESY

With development on hotly-anticipated racing 'threquel' *Colin McRae Rally 3* taking shape, *OPS2* decided that the best way to get a feel for the real rallying experience was to scab a lift in a Ford Focus piloted by the man himself. We could only hope he wasn't in the mood for cutting risky right-handers…

//McRae toys with *OPS2*'s nerves. At the end of the run he grins like a maniac//

"I take it you've not been in a rally car before," says Colin McRae, before his voice is drowned out by a monstrous but pure engine sound. He's right, which is why we're instinctively reaching out for something to hold on to as his rally-tuned Ford Focus suddenly rockets off at a ludicrous speed along the rugged dirt track.

As it immediately appears that we're heading for an ugly collision with a forestry commission pine, the image of Colin McRae and co-driver Nicky Grist bracing themselves as their car dived and rolled its way out of the World Rally Championship just five days earlier springs inexorably to mind. It looked horrific on TV, and the car certainly took a good battering, but thankfully McRae and Grist walked away unscathed, more concerned about broken dreams than broken bones.

Interviewed that same evening after a routine hospital check-up, McRae seemed circumspect about his accident, accepting it as an occupational hazard of the sport. Renowned for his daredevil driving style, McRae only needed to finish ahead of his rivals Tommi Makinen and Richard Burns in the Network Q Rally of Great Britain to take the overall championship. In fact, at the time of his retirement, McRae was actually leading the way (with Burns back in fourth on the leader board) but he doesn't subscribe to the idea of playing safe. Mishearing an instruction from Grist to cut a left-hand turn, McRae lined himself to cut the immediately following right-hand.

In a split-second he realised his mistake, but seeing that the road's surface looked okay from where he was sitting, McRae tells *OPS2* that he decided to cut the right-hand anyway. Despite this miscalculated choice ending all hopes of a second world championship title at the last hurdle, you get the impression that McRae would take the same risk again if he thought he could shave an all-important half second off his stage time.

Anyway, back to the car, and – initial tree hazard negotiated with barely believable ease – McRae continues to give *OPS2* the drive of its life. It rapidly becomes clear that despite the seemingly constant threat of collision, there'll be no flipping the car this time. For a start, McRae's on his own practice circuit, and of course he's only driving at 75 per cent. Which makes you wonder just how frightening it is to sit where we are (in the co-pilot's seat) when he's going full pelt.

Leaping over crests, bowling into tight hairpins with abandon, accelerating sideways, gambolling on narrow tracks with sheer drops to the side; riding in a rally car is better than any theme park ride. So inexplicable is the experience that you can barely comprehend you're in a car at all; surely nothing that moves so fast over unstable terrain and around vicious chicanes can actually be touching the ground, let alone be controlled by the instinctive reactions of one man? And yet there sits Colin McRae, expression of total serenity on his face, making speed-of-light gear changes while constantly readjusting the steering wheel and dancing over the pedals like Fred Astaire.

YOU CAN BE McRAE

It's a thrilling and thoroughly surreal five minutes. Only after experiencing the drive first hand can you appreciate how far beyond the zen of mortals this rally driving business is. You can imagine what a kick the drivers get out of it. McRae's already done this circuit ten times today so he plays around on a couple of bends, cutting them ever tighter and toying with *our* nerves. At the end of the run, he's grinning like a maniac.

All of which makes Colin McRae an ideal videogame figurehead. He's a sportsman in total command of his domain, and willing to push himself that bit further to get results. He represents excitement, adventure and technical excellence and he obviously loves what he does. In essence, we'd all like to be Colin McRae. And that's where Codemasters comes in.

The men responsible for distilling the essence of Colin McRae into videogame form are Producer Guy Wilday and Associate Producer Rick Nath. With two top-selling iterations of *Colin McRae Rally* on PSone under their belts, they're confident about the job in hand and eager to fulfil expectations for the new PS2 game. *Colin McRae Rally 3*'s not due until ⮕

COLIN McRAE RALLY 3

Ford's practice rally
stage, in the heart of
Cumbria's Lake District.

As these exclusive
PS2 shots show, when
Codies make snow,
they *make* snow.
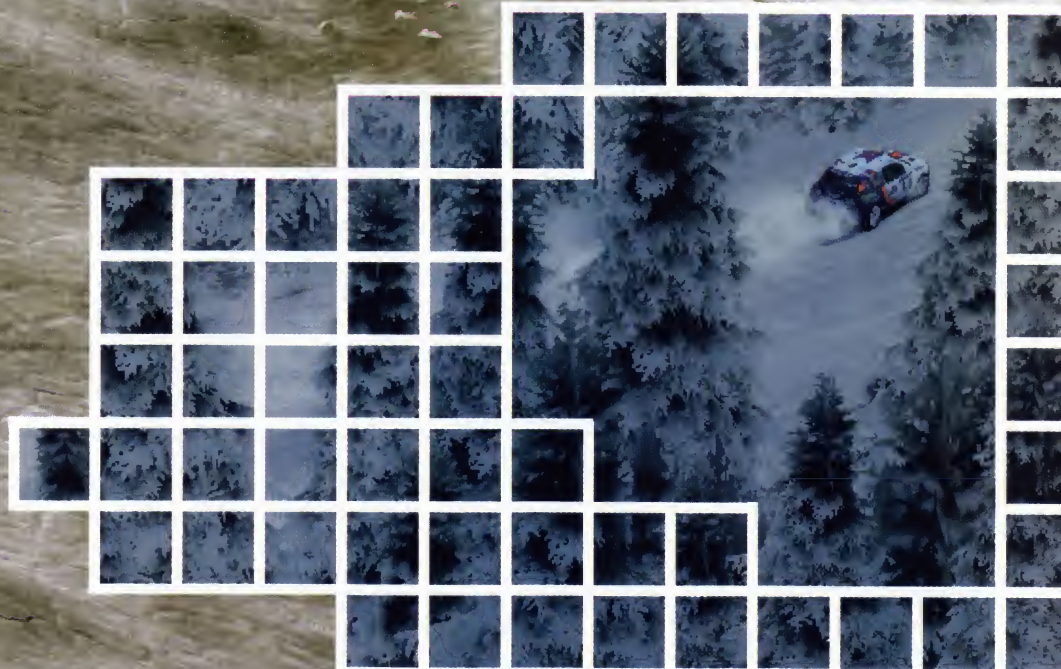
These early screens depict the kind of detail that's being aimed for.

These early screens depict the kind of detail that's being aimed for.

//Visual polish is not enough – gamers now demand a whole new experience//

WRC IN 2002
There's no time for Colin to dwell on disaster – the 2002 rally season is already underway. Watch out for high profile terrestrial TV coverage thanks to Channel 10.

- ☐ 17-20 Jan: **Monte Carlo**
- ☐ 31-03 Jan/Feb: **Sweden**
- ☐ 07-10 Mar: **Corsica (France)**
- ☐ 22-24 Mar: **Catalunya (Spain)**
- ☐ 18-21 April: **Cyprus**
- ☐ 16-19 May: **Argentina**
- ☐ 13-16 June: **Acropolis (Greece)**
- ☐ 11-14 July: **Safari (Kenya)**
- ☐ 08-11 Aug: **Finland**
- ☐ 22-25 Aug: **Germany**
- ☐ 19-22 Sept: **San Remo (Italy)**
- ☐ 03-06 Oct: **New Zealand**
- ☐ 31-03 Oct/Nov: **Australia**
- ☐ 14-17 Nov: **Great Britain**

November, so the game s still in planning stages, but Wilday and Nath are adamant that a new platform means a new emphasis for the series. The powerful new console is motivation enough for taking the next step, reasons Wilday. We also wanted to capitalise on the access we have to Colin and to his team at M-Sport [Ford rally s engineering team] to make the game a more immersive rallying experience. In Colin McRae Rally 3 our aim is to really make the player feel that they are Colin. We re still finalising exactly how this will work, but there ll be a lot more flow between races. It won t just be a dip-in-and-out thing.

Nath hints that there ll be a more involved vehicle setup screen, as well as a process of analysis and feedback after each rally, although he stresses the importance of retaining easy accessibility for all players is vital.

We ve had a big response from fans of the series detailing what they d like to see in the new game, he continues. There are obviously those that would like more of a simulation experience but the majority are really happy with our balanced approach. Yes, they want better graphics, yes, they want better physics, but overall they just want a brilliantly playable racing game.

It s testament to the PlayStation 2 that developers now accept that graphical excellence is a minimum requirement of gamers. If a series is being carried over from PSone to PS2, visual polish alone is not enough. Gamers now demand a whole new experience.

Wilday: We ve had to look at improving every area of the game. Graphics are a given, so the next thing we jumped on was the physics engine. Now we ve got a much more sophisticated method for distinguishing road surfaces, so you won t just notice the difference between gravel and tarmac, but the depth of the gravel and the wetness of the tarmac at different sections of the same stage.

Just because the game isn t aiming to be an out-and-out rally simulation doesn t mean that the level of detail applied to McRae s Ford Focus will be anything other than utterly meticulous. The detail is crucial, emphasises Nath. Detach any panel on our vehicle models and you can see exactly the same parts as you can see on the real cars in the workshop.

In fact, this very interview is taking place in the M-Sport workshop, only a few metres from where an army of serious-faced mechanics are beginning to build a fleet of Ford Focus rally cars for the new season at a cost of $700,000 each. Nath calls up some vehicle models on his laptop before comparing the detail with a car being tweaked behind us. The M-Sport guys have given us access all areas, they ve been fantastic, enthuses Wilday. So, is technology at a point where M-Sport s car design computer programs can somehow be implemented into the creation of vehicle models for Colin McRae Rally?

Not really, there s only so far you can go. Generating a real car is still vastly more complex than generating a car in-game. I d be keen if we could directly import M-Sport s data — it would make our lives a lot easier — but that day is still a way off. We ve got differing aims anyway; they need total driving precision, we need to make sure it just looks right onscreen.

DRIVING LICENCE
While Codemasters may have unlimited access to McRae and M-Sport, it doesn t own the official WRC licence that would allow the development team to work with the actual stages and locations used in the sport. For game developers potentially working with lucrative, official licences such as this one, it presents both advantages and disadvantages to the final product.

Undaunted, researchers were dispatched to all corners of the world in order to collect physical and photographic data from areas as similar as possible to those raced in the real WRC. Wilday emphasises that the research was thorough and wide-ranging.

We re looking to capture the character of the countries involved, not just the different road surfaces and climates. We really want to heighten the specifics of certain countries, trying to avoid making a generic snowy course and then just calling it Sweden.

The stages have to be designed from scratch as the real courses can be used as inspiration only, although Wilday views this state of affairs as an advantage. The freedom allows us to really tailor the game for maximum challenge and enjoyment.

Some real-life rally stages last over an hour so that s not really suitable for the game, Nath continues. We need to pack all the excitement into a shorter distance. Again, it s about striking that balance between arcade and simulation.

Wilday: We d rather aim to include fewer stages but of a higher quality, than loads of substandard courses. The track designers are always looking to implement nuances like deceptive bends or crests, and you ve got to somehow incorporate the random factor, because as you ve seen, even the best drivers can hit a hidden rock and crash out.

We think we know to whom he refers. A game that is branded with the name of one specific sportsman, as opposed to one which utilises a licence for an entire sport, really needs the personality of said sportsman to shine through in the gameplay somehow. Wilday reckons that in Colin McRae, they ve got their man.

Colin is the most aspirational driver out there. He has such a distinctive style and that s what we re capitalising on. Colin only knows how to drive at 100 per cent and his motivation is always to win. For me, his approach to driving really is the inspiration behind the game. ☐

When McRae's behind the wheel, there's no time to admire the view.
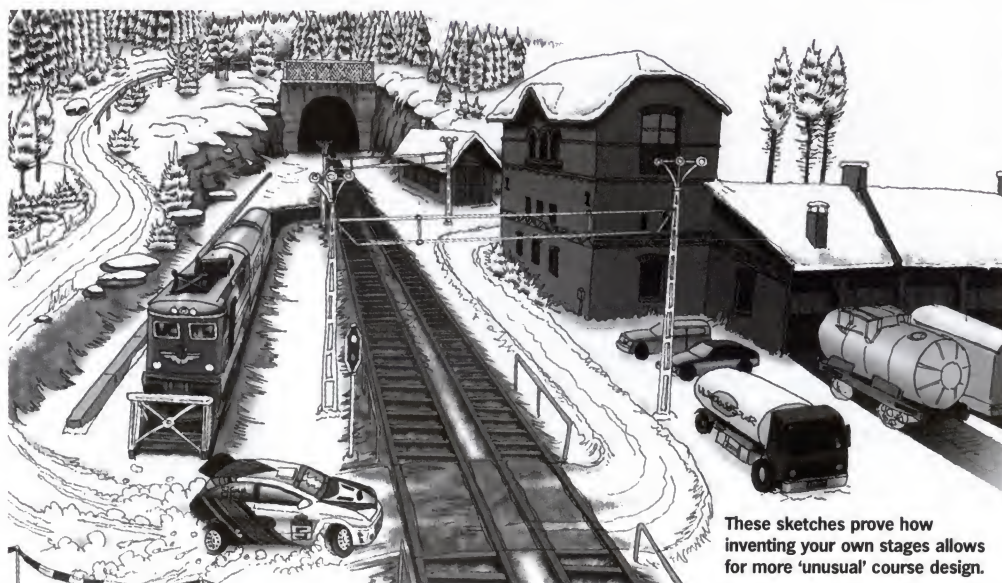
These sketches prove how inventing your own stages allows for more 'unusual' course design.

Producer Guy Wilday and (below) Associate Producer Rick Nath.

The meticulously created new in-game Focus model (2002 liveries TBC).

COLIN McRAE RALLY vs WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The Codemasters team don't mince their words when tackling the subject of the new kid on the rally block.

Guy Wilday: "We've had lots of rivals over the years if you look back at *V-Rally* and *Tommi Makinen Rally*. Each one has promised the world and they've fallen short every single time. I feel the same about *World Rally Championship*. The level of realism and detail we're heading towards will far surpass that of *WRC*."

Rick Nath: "I really don't think the *WRC* dev team fully utilised the access they had to the real-life sport from owning the official licence. We're trying to give a more accurate and rounded depiction of rallying."

Guy Wilday: "*Colin McRae Rally* has always been perceived as the benchmark. With *Colin McRae Rally 3* we're raising the bar again."
Your move, Martin Kenwright. →

COLIN McRAE

The man himself talks openly to *OPS2* about the disappointments of last season and how he's already eyeing success in 2002.

"That particular accident wasn't so bad. It looked spectacular but I've had worse"

Obviously you had some tough luck in the Network Q rally but how do you feel about your performances throughout 2001?

Personally, I've been very consistent. I only made one real mistake all year and unfortunately it happened at the wrong time. But when you're under the pressure to win you've got to drive at that speed and push it to the edge. Take away the disaster in the last rally and the season as a whole has been good. We were leading the manufacturer's championship for a long way and we were in with a chance of winning of the driver's title and the manufacturer's title so that alone is quite an achievement. Unfortunately it's the not winning that sticks in everybody's minds.

You seemed relatively unfazed by the accident. How do you reach that state of mind?

You've got to accept that things like that can happen in this sport and you're mentally prepared for it. That particular accident wasn't so bad. It looked spectacular but I've had worse.

Your rivalry with Richard Burns was much publicised in the run-up to the Rally of Great Britain. Is it really as intense as the press made out?

Yeah, the rivalry is very, very strong. But Richard and I still talk to each other, we don't dislike each other. Obviously both being British and both wanting to win the World Championship, there was a lot of hype. Unfortunately, the result went the wrong way.

Nevertheless, do you feel you're still the 'people's champion'?

I think when you saw the support that turned out during the last rally it was certainly more in my favour. Whether or not some of these people might now desert me for Richard…! All I can do is fight back. At least we get the opportunity to do that straight away.

There's less than two months between the end of the Rally of Great Britain and the start of the new rally season in Monte Carlo. Do you get much time for recuperation or do you prefer to dive straight into pre-season training?

I start testing almost immediately, which is probably a good thing in my case. You don't have much time to sit and sulk, you've got to concentrate and get on with the job.

Monte Carlo isn't every driver's favourite rally…

No, but it's one I would love to win because it does have a certain prestige, although I don't really like driving in the conditions there.

So what course are you looking forward to taking on in 2002?

The really good thing about the championship is that every course is different – that variety is the good thing about the game as well. My two favourites are Sweden and Safari, because they're so extreme and different to the rest. Safari is almost more of an adventure than a rally, although in the last few years it has become more and more like a European speed event, which is a shame, although it still has that magical character.

Would you have liked to race back in the days when rallying was more of an endurance test than a speed event?

Yeah, I'd have loved to. I think it would be great if the World Rally Championship still had a one-off event like that.

What input have you had into the production of the *Colin McRae Rally* videogames?

I work very closely with Codemasters in trying to make the experience as realistic as possible. I've played lots of other similar videogames and most of them are really crap, the vehicle handling's nothing like it's supposed to be. I'm in an ideal position to give guidance on how the game should work and how the car should handle.

Are you as good at playing the game as you are driving a real rally car?

No. I always have to practise because wherever I go I get challenged by young kids. I practise a couple of specific stages and insist that anyone who challenges me has to race in a stage of my choice so I don't lose too much face.

How close do you think these videogames can come to recreating the combination of split-second reactions and racing strategy you need to compete in a real-life rally?

There are still going to be obvious differences because one of the main things about driving a car or any vehicle is that you can feel what's happening through the seat of your pants. You can feel when the car's going to lose grip and you can almost anticipate a problem. You can't do that with the game so you can only make decisions based on what you see on screen. But the reliance on quick reactions is the same. As soon as you see the car doing something that it shouldn't, you've got to correct it. At the end of the day, there's a difference in that videogames are more of a vision thing than a feeling thing, but you still have to be sharp and concentrate 100 per cent.

Could you ever see a day when videogames such as *Colin McRae Rally* could be used by Ford or other manufacturers to test out how to take a particular bend on a particular surface without the risk of damaging an expensive car?

The manufacturers would love that. In a way, they're already using computers a lot in the design of the cars, the setup, the suspension and so forth. With the technology becoming ever more advanced, you could well find that happening in future. □

McRae of light: Colin looks forward to better luck in the 2002 World Rally Championship.

Don't let the schoolgirl's uniform fool you – this girl will kick your ass. If you're a vampire.

TEXT: AMOS WONG

MONSTER DIRECTOR

Our man in Japan interviews director Hiroyuki Kitakubo on creating *Blood: The Last Vampire* and other digital monstrosities.

The Yokota Air Force Base in Japan has been infiltrated, but espionage is far from the agenda. They're not spies – indeed even human in their true form – but beast-like vampires. The guarded compound serves as their feeding ground. Hunting them down is Saya, an angst ridden young woman who has been admitted into the Yokota high school under cover, accompanied by agents of an indeterminate organisation. She's armed neither with crosses or Holy Water, as only a single blow causing massive blood loss will exterminate the beasts. Fittingly given her nationality, the weapon of choice is a samurai sword.

Within minutes of the opening, *Blood: The Last Vampire* establishes itself as digital anime of the highest pedigree and the feature has received several awards since its release. Competing with 148 works, it took out the Animation Grand Prix at the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs Media Art Festival, as well as Best Feature Film at World Animation Celebration 2001.

Accolades however were probably the furthest things from Hiroyuki Kitakubo's mind when production wrapped. "I was so highly strung," the otherwise funny and affable director sighs. Exhausted and not in the best of health, he jokes that it felt like he was cursed by vampires, unable to even go bike riding – the director's favourite pastime. Starting in the industry at the age of 15 (as an inbetweener on the classic 1979 series *Mobile Suit Gundam*), Kitakubo candidly admits that working in animation has never been a walk in the park. "But if you just go in with the attitude that 'ooh, this is sooo tough,' its unhealthy. You have to approach it enthusiastically to keep motivated – that's very important." Animated at renowned studio Production IG, *Blood* originated from acclaimed director of *Ghost in the Shell*, Mamoru Oshii, who was also the catalyst of IG's other recent critically lauded anime, *Jin-Roh*.

"Mamoru Oshii held a workshop for a group of young people who wanted to become animators," Kitakubo explains. When enough material emerged from Team Oshii's planning sessions for a feature, he was asked to direct the project. "Vampires are popular all over the world, so I thought that a vampire story was something that could be understood by a wide audience." But with the events unfolding at the Yokota Base before the Vietnam War, Kitakubo was also after an environment that was a little more unusual from the anime norm. "A contemporary or popular setting wouldn't be so interesting: everybody will be familiar with it." Juggling other aspects of the production, three trips were required to the actual base for photographic research of the architecture and vehicles, taking up about six months in total. ➡

Ah good, screaming hell demons.

BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

Saya is looking pretty demure here, but there's that Samurai sword to consider...

THE BOOKS

Blood the Last Vampire:
Night of the Beasts
RELEASED: 30 October 2000
SERIAL: ISBN4-8291-7449-8
PRICE: ¥1,800

Blood the Last Vampire:
Yami o Sasou chi
RELEASED: 25 January 2001
SERIAL: ISBN4-8291-6109-4
PRICE: ¥460

Blood the Last Vampire:
Shanghai Fleeting Sadness
RELEASED: 1 July 2001
SERIAL: ISBN4-8291-7474-9-C0093
PRICE: ¥1,600

WEBSITE LINKS
Director Mamoru Oshii
http://www.oshimamoru.com/
Production I.G
www.production-ig.co.jp/
Blood the movie
(DVD): $34.95
www.avchannel.com.au
Blood the game
www.scej.jp/blood/index.html
Blood the books
www.productionig.co.jp/anime/
blood/novel.html

Young, angst-ridden and sword touting. Yeah, baby.

Don't ask - we don't know what this is and don't want to.

And when you're angst ridden, there's a lot of brooding to be done.

🔊 HELPING CG HAND

Despite the digital production process, Kitakubo still considers the work as 'cel animation' - like the traditional method, frames of animation still have to be drawn by hand. Only now, they're scanned into the computer and coloured on screen, as opposed to painting onto transparent cel sheets. "By using computers, you can embellish the cel work with many more effects and 3D elements; it makes the visuals cooler and more interesting." About 30 percent of Blood was created as 3D elements, which enabled the director to execute complicated shots and camera movements difficult to convey convincingly with purely 2D art. Take the explosive opening where Saya charges at her target and a rising crane shot later overlooking Yokota base: without CG, they wouldn't have been quite the same.

"Of course the technique can be pushed further," he replies, when asked about the future of digital animation. "But in the end, it really depends on what type of work you're creating - some styles wouldn't require the use of 3D elements at all." In the case of *Jin-Roh*, fellow director Hiroyuki Okiura eschewed computers altogether.

IT'S A BLACK ART

Kitakubo's association with Shirow originally came about on the *Black Magic M66* anime. Released in 1986 (adapted from Shirow's manga), the plot concerned two secretly developed combat robots targeting their creator's grand daughter, the military's attempts to retrieve them and video journalist Sybel's entanglement in the ensuing fracas.

"The sponsor, Bandai Visual, was looking for a director for the project," Kitakubo begins. "I suggested that since Shirow was such a meticulous artist, why doesn't he direct it himself?" Shirow replied that his field was in manga - he had no experience in animation - and in turn suggested that Kitakubo join the project as well. "I was credited as a co-director," he admits, but stresses that his contribution was as an assistant. "Shirow did all the storyboards, so really, all the interesting or entertaining aspects of the *Black Magic* anime are from him." Even when mentioning his credit as the character designer, the reply is modest. "That's true," he concedes, "but Shirow was the conceptual artist and just I adapted his drawings to better suit the animation medium." A big admirer of the artist's work, Kitakubo says he wouldn't hesitate to work with Shirow again if the opportunity arises.

Also released in '87 was *Robot Carnival*, a collection of short works by various directors. Originally, all the segments were to be set to music. "Some of us thought that it was pretty dull," Kitakubo admits with a laugh. "The concept could be taken further, so we started discussing different ideas; the directors were given free reign." In his contribution *A Tale of Two Robots*, a Japanese city is levelled as two gigantic retro styled behemoths of Eastern and European origin duke it out. Initially wanting to focus on the people living in the wake of destruction caused by the pair, Kitakubo expanded the story, resulting in the comical slugfest.

Animation is always a collaborative effort, with different artists in charge of specific aspects. Mahiro Maeda (director of *Blue Submarine no. 6* and *Final Fantasy Unlimited*) designed the mecha. "I had a pretty good idea of what the Japanese robot would look like," Kitakubo explains. "The head to be something from traditional festivals, the arms like barrels and so on. But of course, the result was the work of the mecha designer." He let Maeda handle the Western robot. "All I specified was that I wanted it to run on electricity. As long as the final design fit into the world view, I was happy to go along with it."

Directing his first theatrical length anime *Roujin Z* (1991), Kitakubo worked with another manga artist par excellence. Katsuhiro Otomo (Akira) handled the mecha design and script, a social commentary about the aged and comedic SF actioner involving a runaway automated hospital bed. Which happens to be nuclear powered. Kitakubo remarks that every work has thematic complexities in some way or another, so it wasn't particularly challenging to maintain the right balance between the thematic extremes. "I learned many things from Otomo; he's one of the most well know manga artists throughout the world, a great storyteller and artist

//the plot concerned two secretly-developed combat robots//

THE GAME

Blood wasn't the first time Kitakubo had worked with CG; previously he'd directed the opening and nine minutes of cut scene animation for the *Ghost in the Shell* shooter for PlayStation in 1997, upon request from legendary manga artist Masamune Shirow himself. "When we made the opening, there were only really 3 scenes that blended the [2D and 3D] techniques," he recalls. Though minimal compared to *Blood*, he adds that they nevertheless ended up costing a hefty chunk of money and time. So does he actually play any games? "I force myself not to play them, because I know I'll zombify and forget to sleep, eat and work," Kitakubo laughs. "I do like watching people playing them. If I had to, I'd probably play a shooting game...that way I can quit quickly!"

GENRE: "Yaru Dora DVD"
PLAYERS: 1
DEVELOPER: Production I.G.
DISTRIBUTOR: Sony Computer Entertainment
RELEASE: December 21, 2000

Nearly a year and a half old now, the PlayStation 2 'game' of the film was actually more of a semi-interactive movie experience; to the extent that the actual game genre was dubbed a "Yaru dora" DVD, which translates into something like "do drama" by Sony itself. So don't expect to be doing much more than sitting back and watching this game.

She's looking at you. That's not good, that's not good...

with many interesting ideas." When asked what Otomo's really like, Kitakubo grins. "At work, he's very strict, but otherwise, he's kindof like a typical drunken old man!"

COMIC RELIEF

"Its not that I particularly like working in science fiction or action," he says when the conversation turns to *Golden Boy* (1995). A gloriously slapstick and hillariously letcherous comedy, its a complete about-face in tone considering the rest of his works. The six part video series is based on the manga by Tatsuya Egawa, who asked Kitakubo to adapt it to animation. "I really don't think my approach or style of working differs from project to project, though of course on *Golden Boy* I put in some of my own gags."

The story follows young Kintaro Oe as he bikes around Japan, working various odd jobs as a 'student of life.' Everything is documented in his precious notebook. Along the way, there are plenty of mishaps with his employers, toilet humour (literally), and fleeting lust with more than a few beautiful women."I like any genre: love stories, comedies or suspense" Kitakubo says. "Whether it came from a game, a book, a discussion or a manga; it's just about getting a good project and making something cool." Despite some amusing perversions, *Golden Boy* never strays into porn. Its the only genre in which Kitakubo would rather not direct, having worked on part four of an erotic series called *Cream Lemon* in 1985.

In Japan, *Blood* has been a multimedia project, with the anime followed by three novels and a two-part PlayStation 2 interactive animated drama. While Saya's fate is fleshed out by other creatives, Kitakubo admits that he's also thought about a backstory as well as more adventures. "Not in terms of creating a new work though, they're just some ideas I have in mind." Another Kitakubo helmed prequel or sequel looks unlikely then. With so many things hinted about Saya's turbulent past in the anime, the director is nevertheless keeping his lips sealed when pressed for his take. "I'd like the viewers to enjoy coming up with their own thoughts on why she's such an intense character," he says, smiling. What a tease. ∎

FROM THE CREATORS OF
"GHOST IN THE SHELL"

BLOOD
THE LAST VAMPIRE

Reviews Charter

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Review Ratings

Here's what our review scores stand for:

10/10 Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
9/10 A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
8/10 Highly recommended
7/10 Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
6/10 Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
5/10 An average game
4/10 Poor, but still with the odd moment
3/10 Extremely disappointing
2/10 To be avoided
1/10 Beer mat

The OPS2 Awards

We don't hand out high scores for nothing so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.

PlayStation.2 GOLD
The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to PS2 games that score that magic 10/10. The only game to get Gold is *MGS2*. Too right!

PlayStation.2 SILVER
The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!

PlayStation.2 BRONZE
The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

media
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GAME OF THE MONTH

MAXIMO _____ **068**
Smash some skulls and save the day in this next-gen platformer.
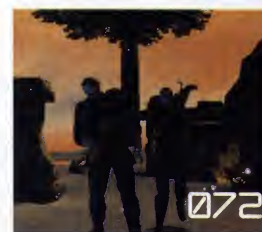
PSone™
The latest titles for the little grey fella

078

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA
BRONZE

It's cute fun, but most gamers will find plenty of enjoyment through the levels of *Maximo*.

Like the platformers of yesteryear, Maximo relies heavily on his jumping ability.

MAXIMO

Cartoon tomfoolery with a pointy piece of metal. *Maximo* aims to strike at the heart of retro gamers.

Publisher: THQ
Developer:
Capcom
Price: $99.95
Players: 1
Out: 10 March
Web site:
www.capcom.com/
maximo
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound
support: No

Back story

Maximo is a tribute to *Ghosts 'N Goblins* and its sequel *Ghosts 'N Ghouls* released back when Duran Duran still ruled the pop charts. The star of these games was one King Arthur, an equally dimunitive character prone to belting about in his boxers trying to fight the undead with his magical sword. *OPS2* wonders what other retro games are set for a new millenium makeover. What would you like to see?

The basic premise of *Maximo* sounds decidedly archaic. Here's a little bloke armed with a sword, unleashed in a massive world packed with ghouls and nasties – and all for the sake of saving his kingdom and royal sweetheart from the evils of a portly power-mongering chief. Done before? Bloody oath. And it's *still* worth playing? Get that sword handy…

You see, in the world of shields, swords and sorcery it all comes down to one thing. Honour. Someone decides they want to mess with your pad, you mess with them. They steal your girl, you move heaven and earth and smash everything in between just to get her back. Maximo, the star of Capcom's latest platforming gem, has just found out that his (once) best mate has done a right royal job on him and pinched both his kingly abode and conned his sweetheart Sophia into marrying him. Not. Happy. Jan.

The greater part of the situation at hand is all found in the opening FMV. The main bits deduced are as such: the Grim Reaper shows his comical side and strikes a deal with you allowing you to return to the physical world; King Achille (said villain) has enlisted an evil army to help him nick the kingdom and Sophia in your absence. As you progress, more tantalising twists are revealed, refuelling regular interest – something too often neglected in lesser titles.

Despite its simplicity, *Maximo* exhibits quality throughout. Indeed, it is its simplicity that provides the overwhelming element of charm. For any of the misgivings that are apparent, this healthy dose is able to mask them. Capcom being the gaming giant

Throughout the course of the game, many characters and items will be able to be collected. Depending on these variables, the hero can go to compromising situations in the blink of an eye!
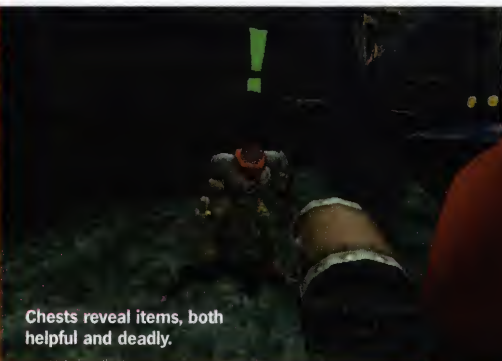
Chests reveal items, both helpful and deadly.

that it is, doesn't mess about with formulas *too* much. It knows exactly what does and doesn't work and is very deliberate in how its games actually play – strangely something that doesn't seem top priority with some other game developers.

Maximo has been made with the intention of reviving the spirit of side scrolling platformer *Ghosts 'N Goblins*, another of Capcom's classics. While it doesn't fall into the realm of being a re-make, there are enough of the simple gameplay elements to satisfy gamers looking to re-live past experiences. Yet, true to form for quality 3D platformers these days, *Maximo* delivers, and the most demanding of gamers will find themselves in the thick of a worthy slash 'em up.

Boneyard Bravado
Everything is pretty dire for young Maximo, until none other than the Grim Reaper steps in. Death is peeved himself, as Achille has woken the dead to assemble his army, effectively putting Death out of work! Right, revenge all round it is then. Maximo's quest sees him going after Achilles for a showdown. Herein lies the game's crux, and also its first weakness.

Your adventuring kicks off in The Boneyard. It, and all subsequent levels, proves to be damn impressive. They're all of decent size, look fantastic and basically every square inch has been used in making each level enjoyable. One recurring theme however, is the element of survival that *Maximo* comes to rely heavily on.

ART HOUSE - THE PLAYERS
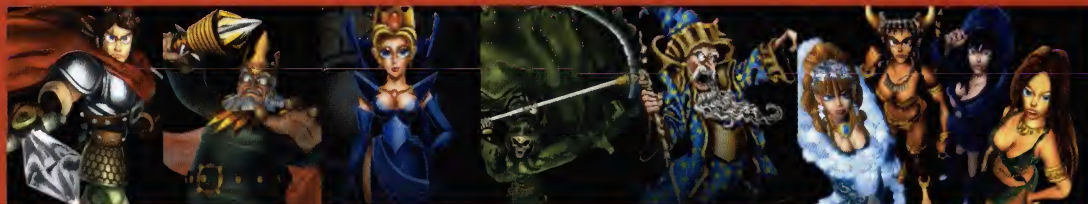
Maximo
Cute yet brave, young Maximo is the hero of this adventure. Equal parts Russell Crowe as seen in the Gladiator crossed with the bumbling ways of Marvin the Martian. He's really just guilty of love...

King Achille
Surely the prime candidate for the climactic final ending! Achille's done more backstabbing than seen in an entire episode of Home and Away.

Sophia
Sophia is the fox behind the whole ordeal. Tricked into Achille's evil ways, she quickly becomes the centre of the unfolding drama. Considering that, this princess better put out come bedtime!

Grim Reaper
Mr Reaper is actually on your side, and he proves to be a cheerful little bloke himself. He gets you up and running, but you're best to keep avoiding him after that!

Magnus
Magnus is a wizard that would be more than handy to have on your side. Too bad though, he's an evil old menace that will make times tough for you. He's also a member of ZZ Top.

The Four Sorceresses
Apart from Achille himself, there are four sub bosses waiting for you while holed up in separate towers. Each one beaten will earn you a pash with a saucy Sorceress (see Swapping Spit). Rockin'.

The armour degradation system is quite funny. If you're down to your underdaks, expect to be KO'ed pretty soon!

Sorcery is a strong element in *Maximo*, and adding a mystical feel throughout.

Levels vary from jungles to swamps to icy wonders!

What results is that, level after level, you start off at Point A, collect a few things on the way and get to Point B in decent shape. Granted, this is all part of the *Ghosts 'N Goblins* experience, but it does present obvious gameplay limitations and *OPS2* would still like to have seen a greater addition of gameplay and puzzle elements to balance out the blend.

Visually, *Maximo* is brilliant. Coupled with the distinct feel of the characters and worlds, Capcom has successfully managed to come up with levels packed with colour and detail, and calculated with specific measure in terms of enemy, token and gap placements.

Maximo comes equipped with a few basic moves and attacks. Swordplay is the main element, and offence centres on slash and stab moves. Being related to the platformers of yesteryear, Maximo's jumps (and their variations) also hold particular significance, as successfully negotiating river crossings and gaping chasms are an absolute necessity.

Don't however, be fooled into thinking that *Maximo's* simplicity is a weakness. On the contrary, its ease and arcade feel are its main strengths. Right from the get-go, *Maximo* is eminently playable; it's over time, sadly, that interest begins to wane.

Bones Brigade

Sword wielding takes just a small amount of practise to start rolling and once you've mastered using your shield you should be able to negotiate levels relatively unscathed.

Small details within character appearance and animation are excellent. Maximo himself moves very fluidly, and moving him about is evidence again of the amount of development time spent. Collision detection is spot on and there is a genuine 'feel' apparent, as you're able to strike almost every object in sight.

A host of ghosts and skeletons awaits you to halt your progress. Working as Achilles' servants, you can look forward to dispatching foot-soldier

Enemies exhibit great AI and will invariably pursue you to attack. Disposing of them takes precise attacks as well.

There isn't a great deal of special effects, however swordplay looks great.

//Maximo is the result of Capcom's genuine desire to blend gaming's historical elements with the best of today's innovations.//

skeletons, sledgehammer-toting demons, axe-throwing goblins and cave trolls. Each enemy type requiress specific attacks, ensuring that complacency doesn't set in.

Each level (there are 30 spread over five worlds) has plenty of tokens, 'koins' and power ups to collect. This is pretty much standard fare for a platformer of this ilk, but they do add (particularly power ups) a great deal more enjoyment and challenge. Power-ups enable you to upgrade Maximo's weapons and his own abilities to attack. As you delve deeper, up to 40 power ups become available and result in longer swords, fire or ice blades, using your sword like a boomerang discus or even types of magic – allowing you to conjure up snowstorms!

Koins allow you to buy armour, extra lives and (of all things) styled boxer shorts! This takes us to the health degradation system - yet another element revived from yesteryear's games. While we've seen similar efforts previously, it still remains rather ingenious and provides for cute fun. As Maximo takes a battering, his armour gets stripped away from him, until all he's left with is a pair of boxer shorts - right before he's squeezed out of existence. A nice touch, and all important to the character of the whole shebang.

Achilles has also left a few Spirit Collectors

scattered about the place and these are also crucial to collect. Score 50 of them (they appear as blue mist once you smash the Collector open) and you'll earn yourself a Death Token that essentially works as a Continue that you're able to cash in with Death himself on D-Day!

There's some handy camera work evident too – which is very important in a 3D adventure on such a sprawling scale. A quick tap of the shoulder buttons sets the thing back straight and also gives a crucial first-person view that helps in negotiating new obstacles.

Maximo is the result of Capcom's genuine desire to blend so many of gaming's historical elements to the best of today's 'next generation' innovations. it must also be recognised that there are limitations that will frustrate the 'modern' gamer more focussed on games featuring stealth and conspiracies. *Maximo* reeks of charm that can only be appreciated by a gamer experiencing it firsthand and is as enjoyable as any 3D platforming title released thus far on the PlayStation 2. □ **Richie Young**

Down to your daks again Maximo? Don't you think that you should save this kind of behaviour for the big finale and reunion with your ever-loving Sophia? We sure do...

MAXIMO - GHOSTS TO GLORY

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	An excellent mix of retro and modern gaming culminating in one of the strongest 3D platformers available on the PS2.
- Challenging and time consuming - Humorous yet not tacky - To satisfy our 'old school gamer' urges	- Can get frustrating at times - Maximo is likeable but possibly too 'kiddy' for some folk	

Graphics	Rich and detailed from go to whoa.	09
Sound	The audio truly adds to the experience.	08
Gameplay	Perfect to pick up and play.	08
Life span	Gets tedious at various points.	08

08

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

To complete each section of the game you'll have to conquer five separate levels and a boss. Each hub has its own spooky theme.

The Boneyard
A fairly easy introduction to the game, this stinking burial ground introduces you to some of the game's less deadly opponents and allows you to hone your sword fighting skills for the later, trickier levels.

The Great Dank
The swamps of the kingdom are a more perilous prospect. They are populated with zombies that throw piranha fish and giant alligators that rear out of the fetid water. The best-looking of the hubs, but don't be seduced by the pretty scenery.

Graveyard of Ships
You're entering more familiar platform territory here with much hopping across ice floes required. The frozen wastes are populated with wrecked ships and the souls of dead - but extremely dangerous - pirates. It's getting tricky now.

Realm of Spirits
A first-class nightmare of a level and 'proper' platform fare. One slip as you bounce between rocky outcrops or a mistimed run past an unpleasant swinging obstacle and it's curtains.
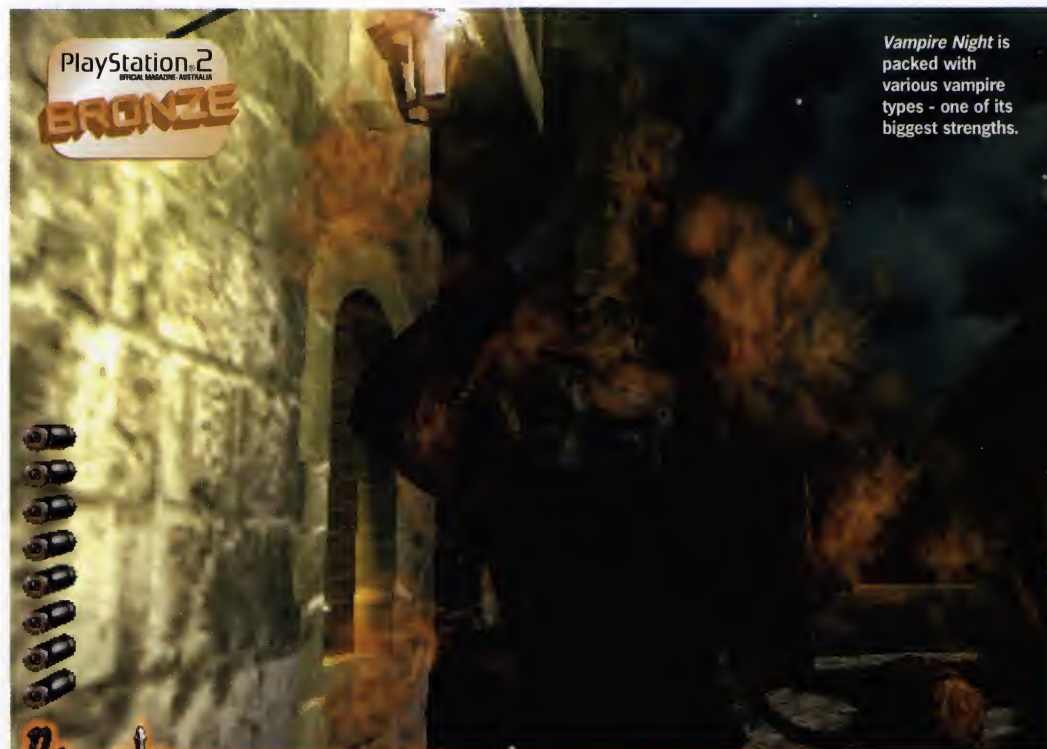
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE · AUSTRALIA
BRONZE

Vampire Night is packed with various vampire types - one of its biggest strengths.

Cinematic camera angles successfully add to the feel of the adventure.

VAMPIRE NIGHT

Two gaming heavyweights pool their resources for this brooding shoot 'em up.

Despite their stoned swagger, don't mistake this pair for Cheech and Chong.

Publisher: Sony
Developer: namco/Sega/Wow
Price (G-Con bundle): $129.95
or $99.95
Players: 2
Out: 3 May
Web site: www.namco.com/ games/vampire_night
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound support: No

Back story
Vampire Night is a perfect conversion of the one played in arcades everywhere. That version was based around Namco's famous 246 arcade architecture. OPS2 can also revela that the game includes a very intriguing plot twist that is bound to amaze those who dare to delve into the world of *Vampire Night!*
While we dare not give anything away, we can hint to you that all is not as it seems with its two stars!

Selective breeding isn't normally associated with videogames, but *Vampire Night* goes as close to genetic engineering as anything gamers have ever had lavished upon them before. This shooter is the result of a collaboration between Namco and Sega, both renowned for their arcade games and PlayStation shoot 'em ups. Namco (*Point Blank, Time Crisis*) and Sega (*House of the Dead*) along with the enlisted expertise of Wow Entertainment (*Alien Front Online*, Sega Dreamcast) have come up with what is essentially, the sequel to the critically acclaimed *House of the Dead*.

Played most successfully with Namco's G-Con 2 light gun, *Vampire Night* sticks faithfully to the simplistic light gun formula and is basically the home version of the arcade game. Played from a first-person perspective, you progress on a pre-determined course as you blast your way through hordes of vampires. That said; *Vampire Night* is the most graphically impressive shooter ever released – comparable to the arcade version itself.

Of equal significance, the mood captured in *Vampire Night* is superb. The action revolves

around two main characters, Light and Shadow, both defending a town full of people. Pumping forearms is definitely the order of the day!

Point Blank and *Time Crisis* both have their share of flaws. While gameplay remains a feature, they lack the graphics and sustained longevity; and in *Time Crisis'* case, any character. Not so here.

Once the cheesy dialogue from some of the supporting cast is overlooked, the mood from the surrounding environment impresses. The symphonic music, the grandeur of the castles and the cobble-stoned walkways draw you inexorably into the realm of Vampireville. Pushing the story are FMVs, which have a distinct cinematic quality.

A myriad of vampires has been cast for shooting chaos as well. To mix up the affair, various types with specific attacks and characteristics are included so it's not a matter of 'seen one, seen 'em all'. In fact, this couldn't be further from the truth. Expect vampires of different sizes. Some will munch, others swipe, and the nastier ones wield weapons and lurch at you from under the ground.

To deal with the barrage of attacks, weapon upgrades become available to you. The main ones

You'd best start shooting right about now! Vampires don't need friends.

Indoor areas are particularly impressive and their backgrounds show consistent detail.

These blokes aren't your run-of-the-mill Vampires. They own weapons!

Even scarier than watching your aunt hula hoop on Christmas day.

It's all fun and games until you're cornered and clean out of bullets!

1. *Vampire Night*'s plot is unfolded just as it would through the page's of an ancient book. It's the finer details like these introductory screens that excite the senses and lull you into the adventure.
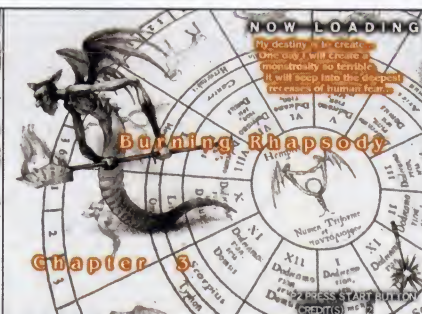
2. Each unlocked chapter will reveal more Vampire types that haven't appeared in the previous levels. This adds to the sustained quality of the game, and the themed chapters become increasingly frenetic invoking fear.
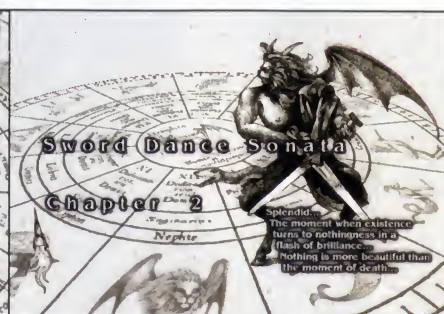
3. The outcome of the plot is more-or-less out of your control, however the major plot twist that has been included in almost reason enough just to play *Vampire Night*. *OPS2* are still enthralled!

are straightforward, such as higher capacity magazine rounds, but it's the ballistic improvements that do the most damage and provide the most fun. Bullets with different tips are rewarded and depending on which type, will inflict greater damage on your dentally-advantaged foes. These become almost essential when the action heats up in the later chapters and are awarded by shooting various pieces of background scenery and by saving villagers' lives from vampires.

There isn't a huge cast of supporting characters to speak of, but one pig-tailed village girl is a recurring character. Through her, you learn details about the village's history. giving you an insight into specific areas that you'll move into.

Due to the lack of depth synonymous with such games, *Vampire Night* is not exactly spectacular to play; rather it's the immersion of the game that sucks you in. Long-term monotony is bound to set in amongst most, but fans of any arcade shooter (and particularly *House of the Dead*) will be attracted like fish to water. indeed many improvements and separate features have been added to the PlayStation 2 version - something bound to whet a few appetites.

In the main Arcade mode, seven levels are there to be conquered but it's the 'unique to PS2' Special mode that adds the anticipated 'extra' dimension. Based around the plot in Arcade mode, Special mode adds villagers who appear, leaving you hints and providing challenges. Here, you'll be able to earn money which you can then return to the store and buy upgrades. In this respect, Special mode adds very slight RPG elements.

Similarly, Training mode doubles as a collection of mini games in the midst of the adventure. There are 17 games, all completely random and comprehensive. Some elements

shared with *Point Blank* can actually be seen here and tasks range from rapid fire to sight exercises.

Going it solo and playing on your own is enjoyable but it's two-player blasting where *Vampire Night* shines. Matched with two G-Cons, blasting away and competing for survival with a friend makes for fantastic action and heated fun. The statistical rundown on accuracy will always provide prime fodder for contentious banter too!

Vampire Night is not without its flaws. It's no more guilty of lacking depth than other shooters available but regardless, this is where the primary criticisms are bound to lie. If you're using a G-Con and have your wits about you, finishing the game can be done in just a handful of tries. in terms of value for money, this is an obvious deterrent for everyday punters.

The achievements of *Vampire Night* are plain to see. Unfortunately, its weaknesses are as well and the common problem of shallow gameplay have not been addressed. *OPS2* certainly considers this a supreme game for its genre, but its drawbacks will mean it has limited appeal to the greater gaming audience. □ **Richie Young**

//OPS2 certainly considers this a supreme game for its genre, but its drawbacks will mean it has limited appeal to the greater gaming audience.//

VAMPIRE NIGHT

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	
- Plenty of visual goodness	- Play it once and you'll hardly ever go back	The strongest and darkest shooter available. If you're after a shooter, you can't go wrong here.
- The best shooter we've seen	- Shouldn't we be using wooden stakes?	
- Tone the arms!		

Graphics	Definitely the highlight of this shooter	09
Sound	Quite limited but successfully adds atmosphere	08
Gameplay	Shooting a TV screen can be fun. For a while	07
Life span	Decent players will fly through this	04

08

Stage your own street barbie and invite all those nice young officers.

CARS X3

AMMO 67

1'42 18

STATE OF EMERGENCY

It's White Riot made flesh. It's a tabloid-baiting moral issue with its nose splattered across its ugly mug. And it's fun!   REVIEWER: Joel Snape

Insight
Kung-fu lass Libra's voiced by hip-hop artiste Jean Grae, whose recent *Shut Da F*** Up* includes the charming couplet, "My tongue's a twelve-gauge, lips are Uzis – spray the page."
Jamie King, Rockstar's head of development, cites the main inspiration for a riot-based game as "English soccer matches".

Let's not waste any time here. Before you start reading the rest of the review, ask yourself the following question: is electrocuting a portly man in the groin a) Sick, b) Funny or c) Funny if it's Happening in a Computer Game? If you answered 'a', stop reading now – you're going to find *State of Emergency* pretty morally repugnant. If you answered 'b' – seek professional help. Everyone else – read on.

Still here? Right. The first thing you need to know is that the plot – some chutney about an Orwellian state in the throes of rioting – is just an excuse to include lots of violence. When you get beneath the surface, *State of Emergency*'s little more than a 3D scrolling beat-em-up stripped of the usual girlfriend-in-peril plot and packed with hundreds of potential beatees. This isn't a bad thing, although it's reflected in

the modes on offer – Revolution feels the most like a coherent, plot-driven game, but it's actually the least fun. You're given a series of missions of the protect, assassinate or pick-up variety. Unfortunately, pitifully few of these make use of the mass of humanity scampering about. When the crowds do get involved – as in the mission where spectators at a public execution suddenly attack the firing squad – it works brilliantly.

So why doesn't it happen more often? Especially when other missions are so dire. Take the one when you're told to escort a hacker to the computer shop. Except he won't take the lead, so you have to run on ahead. And there's no way to look behind while you're running. And if you miss one squaddie in the enormous crowd he'll get stomped to death. And suddenly it becomes clear why the crowds are there. Stress relief.

See, where *State of Emergency* really scores is in the variety of damage it's possible to do to the huddled masses. Alongside the typical assortment of guns, there's an array of riot gear – and each weapon has its own comically exaggerated effect. Taser a bystander, and they twitch. Squirt them with pepper spray, and they clutch their face. Hit them with a sword, and their head comes off. Beat them with their own severed head, and… well, let's leave it there.

In Kaos mode, where the object is simply to

Not the most useful of weapons, but one that you'll only enjoy at close range, again and again… and again.

500

AMMO 95

The shotgun makes quick work of security forces. You can blow off multiple heads at a time.

1'34 39
ROLAND
1'40

2'33 49
ROLAND
1'40

AMMO 95
183   AMMO 18   156

Wait at the bottom and pick your moment to bag some unarmed victims.

Get kitted out and kill all the fleeing shoppers as quickly as you can.

97891
TARGET 100000
CARS X3

1'34⁹¹

Overwhelming odds are the order of the day.

//each weapon has its own comically exaggerated effect//

score points by blowing stuff up and killing Corporation troops, you're encouraged to vary your anti-social activities via the bonus system – for brief periods of time, you're awarded five times the normal amount of points for, say, blowing up cars. It's violent, frantic, and – especially when the elite police arrive – a desperate struggle to earn those three extra seconds you need for the next objective.

The mob dynamics are surprisingly good – looters sprint around carrying stolen goods, gangs defend their turf from the cops and everyone – everyone – cowers when you go nuts with a Kalashnikov. It's little more than a glorified arcade game, but it's brutal, adrenaline-soaked fun. Complete enough objectives, and you earn the genuinely disturbing Last Man Standing mode, where the object's simply to kill a large crowd of defenceless people as quickly as possible.

The problem is, if you're considering buying Emergency – if you've even read this far in the review – you've probably already got GTA 3. In comparison, Emergency's depressingly linear. if you're expecting to hop into an armoured car or pop to the shops for a spot of looting, forget

it. The number of people on screen's staggering – but in terms of depth, it seems like a step backwards.

If your insatiable urge for anti-social violence wasn't satisfied by GTA 3, then this might be worth getting – it's probably better than going out punching cows, or something. But if you play it for ten minutes on a display PS2, don't be fooled – it's an excellent weekend rental, but not much more.

As to the moral outrage that's sure to erupt if this plops onto the Herald's newsdesk, yes, it did make us want to throw a bin through a window – but then, so did Kuri Kuri Mix.

State of Emergency's out now – Rockstar wouldn't let us review it before. Wonder why?

☐ **Joel Snape**

83700
TARGET 100000

Despite its comic book veneer, there are some hugely impressive pyrotechnics to enjoy along the way.

It's not all high-explosives and rapid fire, y'know. Treat yourself by watching The Law choke and writhe on CS gas.

2'04⁷⁸

109900
GANG X3

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	
- It's an enjoyable arcade romp - Weapons effects are hilarious	- It's all over very quickly - One-dimensional gameplay - We are the parents of small children	It'll enrage as much as energise and doesn't have the vision of *Grand Theft Auto 3*, but *Emergency* still provides an enjoyable - albeit shallow - gaming experience.

Graphics	A mix of melodramatic and macabre	07
Sound	The Muzak can grate a little	05
Gameplay	Very broad but as flat as a pancake	06
Life span	A brief, mindless flirtation	05

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

Anyone up for a game of forcings back instead?

Don't worry, mate. That ball can be surgically removed, no problem.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

They shoot! They score... well sort of...

Distributor:
Take 2
Developer: Silicon Dreams
Price: $99.99
Players: 1 - 8
Out: 29 March 2002
Web site:
www.sdreams.co.uk
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound support: No

The world of video game soccer (or football for all the purists out there) has to date been ruled by EA Sports' *FIFA* series and Konami's *ISS* and *PES* series. Debate rages as to which is the superior product, although between the two of them a perfect soccer game could no doubt be produced. Alas, the chances of that happening are about as remote as Antarctica qualifying for the next World Cup, and so the wait continues.

The one big question to ask about *UEFA Champions League* is this: why would you buy a game which focuses on one particular tournament (although you can create custom ones of your own) with a limited number of teams and players, when you could pick up another game with more tournaments, teams and players than you can shake a referee's stick at? Well the answer certainly doesn't lie with the game's options and features, which look meagre compared with other titles on the market. So that only leaves the big three: graphics, sound, and gameplay.

Graphics are somewhat of a mixed bag. On the one hand, *UEFA* features some nicely detailed animations, with player movement and ball physics being spot on. The ways in which players adjust in the face of attempted tackles and general movement around the pitch is impressively lifelike. So too is the way the ball curves and dips rather than always appearing to be on an invisible string. Although there aren't as many special moves as found in other soccer games, there are still enough to keep things interesting. On the downside, stadiums, turf and player models look rather lifeless, and the game has quite a dark look to it, even when matches are being played in the middle of the day.

Things pick up a bit in the sound department, with some entertaining commentary. Impressively, the play-by-play comments are rarely out of time with play onscreen. With various amusing observations and remarks thrown in by the commentators, there's enough there to convince

you that you could be watching a real game. Effects such as crowd noise, whistles and kicks are pretty much standard fare, although admittedly its hard to get really creative with these elements.

Gameplay is solid without being groundbreaking. With a basic, but still entirely adequate control system, *UEFA* plays more like an arcade title than a simulation, despite the impressive level of physical realism. Although the ball is passed into space, rather than perfectly finding the feet of players on every pass, and pass power can now be controlled, the game is still very much offence oriented. Tackling opponents and defence, in general, is certainly far less intuitive. The AI puts up a decent fight though, even on the lowest difficulty setting, with defenders making it consistently tough to penetrate the penalty area and to fire off a decent shot from beyond the box.

At the end of the day, however, it's a tough call to recommend *UEFA* over the likes of *PES* simply because its appeal is so limited. If you're a diehard follower of the *Champions League* and want a game that allows you to relive historical moments of the tournament, then this may well be the soccer game for you. For everyone else, there's nothing revolutionary in *UEFA* to warrant a purchase. □ **Derek Lee**

Come on! This is a bit far out for a shot on goal even for the mighty (ahem!) Manchester United.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Run-of-the-mill soccer title that will appeal to a narrow market
- The ability to play teams of the past.	- Limited number of players and teams.	
- Entertaining commentary.	- Teams and tournaments already in other games.	
- AI opponents put up a decent fight.	- Looks naked.	

Graphics	Players good, all else bad	06
Sound	Entertaining commentary	08
Gameplay	The tricks are overly complex	07
Life span	Plenty of modes and levels	05

06

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

The replays manage to make the whole thing look pretty exciting.

He grunts, he twists, he snarls, he strikes an unfeasible pose, but still...can't...make....the....gate...

EDDIE WOULD GO!

There's almost a challenge in the ski jump event, but unfortunately most of it is in understanding the manual's instructions.

1 Perched somewhat precariously on this metal bar thingy, getting off to a good start isn't too difficult. Unlike in most of the other events.

SALT LAKE 2002

We hit the slopes so you don't have to.

2. As you soar like a bird, the plummet earthwards, begins and the point of the exercise is to align a couple of arrows so they turn green. Gripping stuff.

Distributor: Ozisoft
Developer: ATD
Price: $99.99
Players: 1 - 4
Out: February 2002
Web site:
www.gamenation.com
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound support: No

It would be great if *Salt Lake 2002* from Attention to Detail had all the thrills and excitement of the real-life Winter Olympics competition, wouldn't it? But we're in Australia, not Europe, and not only is it the height of summer over here but most Aussie sports fans look to cricket, football or even soccer for their sporting thrills, not skiing. And that's a shame, because of the six – yes, count 'em – events that *Salt Lake 2002* presents the gamer with, five of them are related to strapping wood to your feet and sliding across the icy stuff.

Attention to Detail was responsible for the similarly-themed button-masher Sydney 2000, which had 12 events and was widely considered to be a decent party game. Salt Lake 2002, on the other hand, is so utterly devoid of any sign of the excitement associated with a gathering of the world's mightiest sports people that it's hard to believe that it made it out of the QA department at all.

Let's start with the graphics. Salt Lake may be a quiet place, stuck out in the mountains of Utah as it is, but the way it's represented in this game, you'd think it was also a ghost town, not a thriving focal centre for Salt Lake County. Big, raw polygons dominate proceedings with not a texture in sight and the lack of anti-aliasing turns the whole landscape into a barren, jagged, affair where the participants are more likely to be injured cutting themselves on the edges of some of the polygons than by clipping a gate and going into a high-speed tumble. Effects are almost non-existent, with no snow kicked up, no shards of ice, etc. The characters' faces are expressionless for the most part and their movements, despite apparently being motion captured, are sluggish and lifeless.

Salt Lake 2002 presents the player with four game modes and the ski-heavy Alpine Downhill, Snowboard Giant Slalom, Ski Jumping, Ladies' Alpine, Freestyle Aerials, as well as the Two-man Bobsleigh events. It's probably best not to ask what happened to speed skating, ice hockey, the luge or

the Nordic combined, to name some of the potentially more exciting options. The event selection interface is very poor and the commentary, while amusing at first, soon reveals itself as repetitious, contradictory and inaccurate.

And the gameplay sucks. The controls are, by turns, twitchy and lethargic and if you make one mistake, it's all over. Except in the slalom, where you get infinite restarts. Salt Lake 2002 is well timed for Australian fans of the Winter Olympics (televised on Channel 7 at time of writing) and both of them will no doubt buy this game. For everyone else, the irony of the title being made by a company calling itself 'Attention to Detail' will not be lost. If anything characterises *Salt Lake 2002*, it's the total lack of attention to detail that saps every last gram of vitality from the game. After you've sat playing this for a couple of hours, you're going to need a beer. Just don't let the Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control catch you. ☐ **Max Everingham**

3. Done correctly, you'll execute an impressive 'Telemark' landing, the crowd will go wild, the commentators will scream excitedly and you'll place...last.
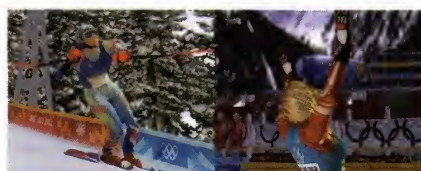
Yes! I did it! I came last again!

The characters are about as expressive as shop front mannequins.

SALT LAKE 2002

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:	Not even as gripping as watching the event on TV, *Salt Lake 2002* is an utterly souless experience.
- Our surname is Rogge	- We like exciting sports games - We own SSX	

Graphics	Powder? What powder?	03
Sound	Pathetic commentary	01
Gameplay	The bobsleigh is fun. The first time	02
Life span	Not even as long as the event lasts	02

03

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

XBLADES
Sometimes, games really shouldn't be made.

Distributor: Ubisoft
Developer: Crave Entertainment
Price: TBC
Players: 1
Out: 29 March 2002
Web site:
www.cravegames.com
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound Support: No

See the detail, see the textures? No, neither did we.

Even grinding is a chore.

Developers left, right and centre are jumping on the extreme sports bandwagon these days and it's really no surprise given their popularity, particularly amongst younger gamers. X-Blades In-Line Skater is a budget PSOne title clearly aimed at this market, and whilst the game doesn't pretend in any way to be able to match the *Tony Hawk Pro Skaters* of the gaming world, younger gamers could feel justifiably insulted by the sheer lack of effort that appears to have been put into this title.

One word to sum up *X-Blades* would be…dodgy. Two words: extremely dodgy. Well, there it is. Let's not beat around the bush, folks. From gameplay to graphics to sound, it plays, looks and sounds downright dodgy. Well, it is a budget title after all I hear you say. True, true, but even the version to be released on the Gameboy Advance is a far superior product in almost every single department. There simply isn't any reason why you would waste your hard earned cash buying such a tired-looking product when it could be better spent on some of the decent budget titles out there, or on old faves appearing in the platinum series.

Graphically, *X-Blades* looks like it was made using an Etch-a-sketch. The characters and environments look so blocky and ill-defined that much of the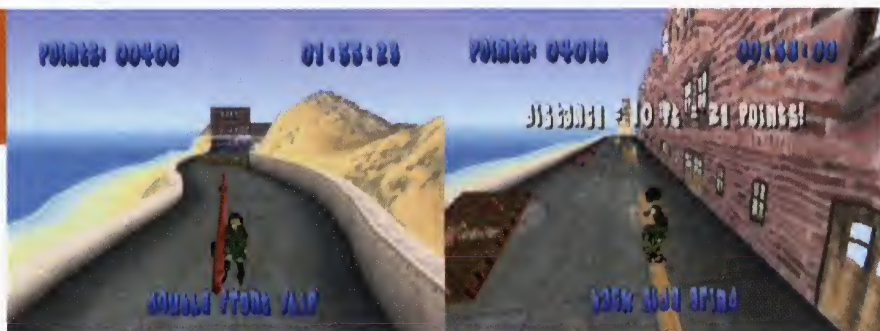 game looks as though you're controlling a runaway blob as it careens over jumps and caroms into other indistinguishable blobs. Sound fares no better. In-game music has a distinctive tinny ring to it and the sound effects are little more than beeps and buzzes.

The "trick system", if it can be called that, consists of no more than mashing together a combination of buttons each time you go over a jump and you never feel that a trick you pull off is anything more than a fluke. Timing is important to a degree but because the route through each of the courses is fixed, you can't even use creativity to find lines through a course or mix up your tricks.

Initially, there are two characters and one course to select from, with others being unlocked.. The question is whether anyone will have the patience to sit through the first course more than once to try and unlock the rest. Although *X-Blades* is targeted at younger gamers, it really offers very little to spark any sort of interest. In fact, playing the game is insulting for the lack of challenge it offers.

Given that there are even retro titles on the market that are better than *X-Blades* in every single area, your money will be better spent on almost anything else. ☐ **Derek Lee**

PS one ™

XBLADES

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:
- For a good laugh.	- No skill or thought required to play at all

Graphics	03	A painful experience from start to finish.	
Sound	03		**03**
Gameplay	02		
Life span	02		

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

It's bright, it's colourful, it's Alfred!

Envrionments are simple and blocky.
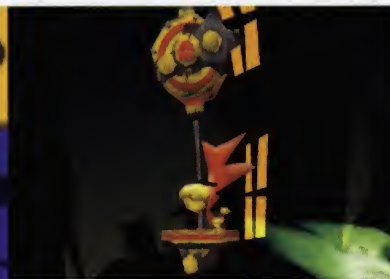
Platforms. You'll see a lot of these.

ALFRED CHICKEN
I don't feel like chicken tonight.

Distributor: SCEA
Developer: Mobius
Price: TBC
Players: 1
Out: April 12
Web site:
au.playstation.com
60Hz mode: No
Widescreen: No
Surround Sound support: No

Alfred Chicken first pecked his way onto the NES,. This uninspired platformer has woefully lame music, apparently on a five-second loop, and sonic effects that wouldn't challenge the capabilities of a Game Boy (let alone GBA). It has dismally blocky graphics and the kind of controls that, in comparison, make an amoeba look complex. One button makes Alfred jump, another makes him attack with his beak – but only, bizarrely, if pressed in mid-air.

Games like this make you wonder what on earth goes through developers' minds in brainstorming sessions.. "Let's port over a game for kids. It'll be cheap, and they'll never notice the lack of quality".

Kids are the same as adults, only smaller. And often far more intelligent. Anyone with children will attest to this. And small kids don't appreciate being patronised and tricked. Up to about 10 years old – until US fast food and TV programming really take a grip – their brains soak up pretty much any stimulus you can chuck at them. They're smart and judgmental. So, when it comes to PlayStation, what they don't need is a bunch of adults trying to hoodwink them with a game where, patently, effort wasn't a pre-requisite in the development process.

What we really need to validate this belief is to test *Alfred Chicken* out on a youngster. Luckily, we keep a small child in the office for just such an occasion, so we pulled him out of the cupboard, dusted him off and sat him in front of the game. And the result? Alfred the Chicken is packed up in a crate and on his way to the processing plant at KFC. ☐ **Max Everingham**

PS one ™

ALFRED CHICKEN

Why we'd buy it:	Why we'd leave it:
- We want to torture a small child	- We own any of the Spyro or Crash games

Graphics	02	Summary: An insult to young game players everywhere – go buy Spyro.	
Sound	01		**02**
Gameplay	02		
Life span	01		

PlayStation 2 VERDICT

SERIOUS SWORD ACTION.
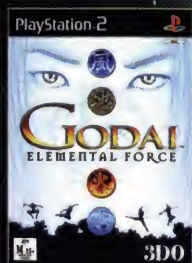
Extreme martial arts action. Projectile weaponry, melee combat and elemental magic. 1-Player or 8 action packed Multiplayer modes. 360 degree stop-action, cinematic camera views and over-the-shoulder combat views.

media

DVD / INTERNET / PRINT / MUSIC

PS2 doesn't just play games, you know. Here's some other stuff you might like…

TEXT: Lee Hart / Sam Richards / George Walter / Graham Dalzell / Mark Wright

TOMB RAIDER

Paramount/$39.95/12 April

Film: We went to see *Tomb Raider* for the action, didn't we? The amazing stunts, the breathtaking set-pieces, the cool special effects and witty script. Didn't we? We didn't go to sit, tongue lolling out, staring with adoration and lust at the quite astounding form of Angelina Jolie cavorting around the screen as pixellated wet dream made live action heroine, Lara Croft. Did we?

Well, of course we did. Jolie is perfectly cast as the physically exciting, aristocratic English adventurer who kicks arse like no other. She has the moves, she gets the voice and looks… gorgeous. But let's talk about the movie. It moves from set-piece to set-piece, with our Lara on the trail of a secret society, the illuminati, who seek to complete the Triangle of Light, an artefact that can manipulate time.

It's complete hokum of course, but it feels so utterly right. From the bad guys to Lara's butler Hillary, it evokes the sense of the games, but has the right elements for a classy action movie.

The other great thing about *Tomb Raider* is that it's perfect DVD fodder: brash sounds and outrageous, huge sets that are all gobbled up hungrily by your home entertainment gear. So do yourself a favour – check your brain in at the door, pop the corn, grab a couple of beers and you'll be set up for the perfect lazy Saturday night in.

Features: The disc has stunning picture quality and you should listen to it on a proper six-speaker setup to get the full benefit of the transfer. There's also a 25-minute Making Of, full of detail. Naturally, as with much of the DVD, it focuses on the assets of its star and what she brings to the movie. As far as the commentary goes, director Simon West gets to pray at the Temple of Jolie for the umpteenth time on this DVD. You also get to see how Jolie got into shape for the movie and the stunts she had to perform. And it really is her doing it!

Verdict: The film is stonkingly good, Jolie is heaven on legs and the extras form a great backdrop to Lara's universe. 8/10.

Angelina put this top on specially for us, you know. Yes she did!

"I ask for an army and all I get is this bunch of monkeys..."

No, really, A Knight's Tale is a hilarious laugh-a-minute rollercoaster of a movie. Sigh.

PLANET OF THE APES
Fox/$39.95/April 24

Film: Tim Burton fans expected great things from his 're-imagining' of the Charlton Heston classic in which an astronaut finds himself stranded on a planet where humans are slaves and apes are the masters. But, despite some superlative make-up designs (courtesy of Rick Baker) and the sight of a delightful little chimp in astronaut garb, the movie fails to deliver.

Ripping off the basic plot of the original, but suffering in comparison every step of the way, Burton's film is never less than entertaining but there's an unmistakable impression that his skewed vision has been kept in check by studio restrictions. And as for the twist ending, where the 1968 version is a supreme, revelatory about-face, here the conclusion is illogical to the point of annoyance. Sheer monkey business. **LH**

Features: The quantity of extras almost makes up for the disappointment of the movie itself. Tim Burton's commentary is lethargic but contains bon mots such as his assertion that apes are almost as scary as Santa Claus. And there's a King Kong-sized selection of behind-the-scenes featurettes.

Verdict: Like most remakes of classic films, this should have been left well alone. **5/10**

A KNIGHT'S TALE
Columbia TriStar/$36.95/20 March

Film: With medieval jousting tournaments played to the strains of Queen's We Will Rock You, knights clad in Nike armour and crowds performing Mexican waves, one thing you can't accuse A Knight's Tale of is fuddy-duddy historical accuracy. This is Rocky with big pointy sticks, a generic yarn of a young squire who battles his way to the top of the jousting tree and wins the heart of the fair maiden who's desired by the villainous champion jouster Count Adhemar.

It's undoubtedly a load of nonsense but it's nonsense that will draw you in and have you rooting for the plucky underdog whether you like it or not. Local boy Heath Ledger is solid as the heroic squire in question, William Thatcher, but the film belongs to Paul Bettany as (of all people) Geoffery Chaucer. An often stark naked boozy gambler, Geoff introduces the contests like a Vegas boxing announcer and is the ideal comic foil to the tense, bombastic knight games. **LH**

Features: There's an amusing commentary by Paul Bettany and Director Brian Helgeland, 11 mini-featurettes, six deleted scenes and an overly-promotional Making Of.

Verdict: Medieval jousting larks given an entertaining modern spin. **6/10**

Willis bravely fought off demonstrators at his 'Return Of Bruno' comeback tour.

MEN OF HONOUR
Fox/$TBC/24 April

Film: This biopic of US naval hero Carl Brashear [Cuba Gooding Jr] who, having battled racism to become the first black graduate of the Navy Dive School, then has to fight to retain his job after losing a leg through a submarine accident, is ideal TV movie fodder – with its inspirational bravery, seemingly insurmountable odds to overcome as well as a horribly mawkish tone and constant emotional manipulation.

Gooding Jr does his best in the lead and there's accomplished support from Robert De Niro as a diving instructor who gives his students hell but secretly has a heart of gold. However, neither of them can rescue the kind of story you'd expect to see cluttering the Channel 7 Wednesday arvo slot between Home and Away and A Country Practise repeats. **LH**

Features: A short Making Of featurette. A lively commentary by Gooding Jr, Director George Tillman Jr and Writer Scott Marshall Smith. 12 deleted scenes and a tribute to Brashear.

Verdict: An interesting true story given shoddy TV movie-style treatment. **4/10**

DIE HARD/DIE HARD 2: DIE HARDER SPECIAL EDITIONS
Fox/$36.95/ 24 April

Film: Despite boasting one of the worst catchphrases in cinema history ("Yippeekiyay... oh forget it") Die Hard singlehandedly rescued the action movie genre from the ludicrous, muscle-bound grasp of Stallone and Schwarzenegger. It's edge-of-the-seat excitement all the way with the besieged skyscraper setting providing the perfect backdrop to Bruce Willis's wise-cracking, terrorist-shooting exploits.

The sequel, set in the rather less confined Washington Dulles airport, suffers from trying to out-thrill and out-quip the original, but it's still a cut above the vast array of wannabes that Hollywood vomited in the wake of the original film's success. **LH**

Features: Die Hard has a bumper offering of three commentaries, a collection of deleted footage and outtakes, and two ace interactive workshops where you can fiddle with the audio mix and edit your own scene. The sequel fares just as well with a Making Of, numerous production featurettes and a commentary by Director Renny Harlin.

Verdict: A bundle of cool extras make this an essential package for action fans. **9/10**

MILLENCOLIN LAUNCH BATTLE GAME

MILLENCOLIN BATTLE GAME   **COMPETITION**

BAND BIO   **PLAY GAME**   **COMPETITION INFORMATION**   **IMAGE LIBARY**

COMPETITION DETAILS

To coincide with the release of Swedish punk band Millencolin's new album *Home from Home*, production team FarFar has created an interactive CD battle game featuring cyborg versions of the band members. It is dead easy to get started and the idea is to do what Millencolin does every day - rock hard and tight!

Just pick up the guitar, drums or bass and fill in the missing instrument from the band's new single, *Kemp*. The tighter you play, the more points you get.

Playing along is great fun but it wouldn't be much of a battle if you couldn't win stuff, right? Every time you play you are awarded points, so if you hang in there and work hard like a 'real' rock star, there are great prizes to be won.

There are two different versions of the game, with two separate competitions and different high-score /prize lists.

ONLINE BATTLE

Sign up online and compete with your score against other players from around the world! The on-line battle is a light version of the game, which is available free online. The game file is only 1 MB and can easily be e-mailed or downloaded by everyone with Internet access.

To play the game, visit www.millencolin.com or www.shock.com.au

ONLINE BATTLE PRIZES

1ST PRIZE: The trip of your choice:
1. Go anywhere in the world to see Millencolin live during 2002! Get a backstage pass and hang out with the band!
2. A trip to Thailand for 1 week!
3. A trip to Riksgränsen, Sweden to go snowboarding!
4. Go Surfing in Bali, Indonesia for one week!

2ND PRIZE: Signed copy of the Australian gold record of *Pennybridge Pioneers*.
3RD PRIZE: The entire Burning Heart Catalogue (over 150 CDs).

CD BATTLE PRIZES

The full version of the game is faster, with enhanced graphics and sound. The CD Battle game is available exclusively to fans who buy the new album *Home From Home*.

CD BATTLE PRIZES:

1ST PRIZE: A Fender Guitar (Win a Fender Stratocaster signed by the band!)
2ND PRIZE: Millencolin skateboard, deluxe jacket and a pair of VANS 'OldSkool' shoes.
3RD PRIZE: Millencolin kit (t-shirts, CDs, stickers, a pair of VANS 'OldSkool' shoes etc).

NEW ALBUM

THE NEW MILLENCOLIN ALBUM, *HOME FROM HOME*, IS NOW AVAILABLE.
MILLENCOLIN BATTLE PRODUCED BY FARFAR, MILLENCOLIN ROBOT DESIGN BY STYLEWAR

postal

This month: *Give us free games, tennis, general stupidity and give us free games…*

STAR LETTER
FREE GAME

This issue, we're combining the "Postal" and "Surgery" sections. The first is usually a forum for discussion where you have your say, the second where we answer specific questions you have. Once we're a few issues in, we might split the two, but that's up to you. If you have something to ask or say, write to us at ps2@derwenthoward.com.au or send snail mail to OPS2, Derwent Howard Pty. Ltd, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction. The winner of the Star Letter each issue gets a game – a good game – of our choosing. Just remember: We want intelligent, informed, letters and comments please, no flaming, no 'my console's better than yours' stuff, no 'when is game XXX out', etc. And for mercy's sake, use the spellchecker if you send your letter by email – in any case, we reserve the right to truncate, hack and slash your letter seemingly at random.

STAR LETTER: DRINKING THINKING

G'Day, I've only recently purchased my PS2. I love your magazine; however I'm totally lost as to what game I'm going to buy next as there are just to many good ones to choose from in your magazine.

GTA3 rocks, I can't see why people are knocking it. Have you done a review in one of your past issues that you'd be able to e-mail me? Keep up the good work.

Many thanks,
Aron, via email

Welcome to the PlayStation 2 fold, Aron and congratulations on making such a wise purchasing decision! Accept a game as a present from us and the accolade of being our very first 'Star Letter of the Month'. You're right – there ARE too many good games to choose from for our beloved machine, but that just makes it more fun. Our advice: turn to page 90 and pick out a couple of gold award winners.

Phew! Thank goodness for that! A word of advice, 'Jamo Snake': learn to spell. Anyhow, this is the first and last letter you'll see of this kind here. Game reviews, just like those for movies, books, plays and so on, are subjective. The reviewer draws on his or her experience, knowledge and references the facts, but at the end of the day, reviews are a matter of opinion. You may not agree 100% of the time, but wouldn't it be a dull magazine, nay world, if you did? So, while we could spend every issue justifying our decisions to a few irate dissenters, we're not going to. So there.

FREE GAMES

My name is Rowan and I hope that you put this letter in your mag. Cause I have been a loyal member of your magazines for the few past years. And I hope my loyalty to your mags has earned me something. I don't want much just one game that I have been dying to get. Max Pain, cause i know that it is an awesome game on computer and it should be even better on the PS2. So i hope you take my loyalty into your brain and decided to give me this game that I have been dying to have. Seya
Row!! D'MAN!! via email

And this is the last letter of this kind we put in here, too. Rowan, we're glad you like the mags and we appreciate your loyalty, so thanks for that. But we're not in the business of sending games to people just because they want them – I'm a (non-Ferrari-owning) member of the Ferrari Owners club, but you don't see me demanding a car from the guys down at Maranello, do you? Now, if you were to take a shot at writing a decent letter next time, you might be picked for 'Star Letter of the Month'.

PUNK S NOT DEAD

I woz just wondering if there is any chance of Sonic Adventure 2 or 1 or Virtua Tennis 1 & 2? These are the best games, especially Virtua Tennis 1 & 2. If these games came out on PS2, especially Virtua Tennis, they would sell so well. One other thing: do you put competitions in your mags? I don't own a PS2 but I'm trying hard to either convince my

mum and dad to buy one or I'm saving up myself. I own a PS1 and I enjoyed the comps in the official PS1 mag. Keep up the good work. Thanx,
Andrew Pruys, via email

Andrew, good luck with convincing the relos: tell them it's a great DVD movie player, too (but then you'll probably have to surrender some playing time over to watching films, I suppose). The games you mention are great indeed – but why don't you take a look at page 20 and read all about Smash Court Tennis Pro from Namco? It has the looks and moves of Virtua Tennis and is a far better sim of the game to boot. Anyhow, the answer is yes, we do put competitions in our magazine – two, in fact, in this very issue (see pages 94 to 98).

STUPIDITY

I can't help but notice the stupidity of some gamers now, recently I was talking to a mate who has brought himself a PS1, he tried to claim that his PS1 plays DVDs despite me telling him that PS1 games only run CDs not DVDs. His reply was, "I was watching one on it last night!"

Also, full credit to you guys, your scores that you give to games are mostly spot on (Ed's note: in PSM2, the magazine our company made before being awarded the official licence). I bought FIFA 2002 with my PS2; I thought the game rocked, I read your review and thought, "that's not right", but after more time playing the game I realised that the game has several major flaws. When will a developer wake up to the fact that we want to be able to score from anywhere in a soccer game, and not have a way where you can score a lot more often then not, anyway thanks for listening, cheers lads,
Liam Butler, via email

And cheers to you too, Liam. Perhaps it's not so much stupidity from your mate but wishful thinking – if he doesn't yet own a PlayStation 2, he may be trying to overcompensate a bit so that he doesn't feel left out of things. Rather than knock a bloke for that, why don't you let him have a go on yours?

FAULT!

I'm writing on behalf of myself and my brother, mostly on the subject of PS2's "near faultless" Pro Evolution Soccer. Pro Evolution Soccer is not "near faultless" at all, it is merely "good". The commentary is terrible, you have to spend weeks to be able to successfully pull off some of the moves, the master league mode could be so much better if the players you get at the start of the season were random every new season and the graphics are nowhere near up to the standard of other sports games such as Madden 2002.

Now this point brings me to the main subject of this letter. You're supposed to review games for their

individual selves, not because they might not be popular over here in Aus! Yes I'm talking about Madden 2002. This has to easily be one of the best and most polished sports title on the market yet it only got 87 when PES got 95! I don't think this is fair! Don't get me wrong, Pro Evolution Soccer isn't that badda' game, its just that it doesn't meet up against Madden 2002, let alone giants such as Gran Turismo 2, SSX Tricky and Gran Theft Auto 3! I also noticed that you marked Madden 2002 as 'best sports sim' and PES as 'best football title'! What's up with that?

Thats about all from me.
Jamo Snake, via email

YOU CAN TELL WHO'S BEEN THERE.

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HARDCO

TIPS, TACTICS, TRICKS, CHEATS. WANT TO RIP YOUR NEW GAMES TO SHREDS? WELCOME TO THE SECTION THAT'S STRICTLY FOR THE HARDCO

POWERLINE CODES

In the Hardcore section of the magazine, we're going to kind of mix it up with loads of cool cheats and tips for the best games PlayStation has to offer; many of which are totally exclusive to this magazine, courtesy of our own, seasoned journos as well as our mates over at Powerline. And speaking of Powerline, don't forget that you can call the guys over there any time, for any game, and use the SLES/SCES codes as a shortcut.

We'll also have walkthroughs to be latest and greatest games that throw up sufficient challenge that, well, sometimes you just need a little help to get through. This month, we're bringing you some tips direct from EA on how to give the opposition the thrasing they deserve in *Cricket 2002*, plus codes on serious belters such as *State of Emergency, Half Life* and *Baldur's Gate*.

Max Everingham
HardCore Editor

WRITE IN!

Stuck? Frustrated? About to slam your Dual Shock 2 through the TV screen? Then write to HardCore. We'll do our best to unearth codes, secrets, walkthroughs or advice for just about any game you want. So, if you need a hand, just pick up that pen or keyboard and write to me, Max Everingham c/o HardCore, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine*, P.O.Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 2022.
Galactic laserpost to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au

Starting next issue, we'll be bringing you full walkthroughs for some of the hottest PlayStation 2 games in this section - for now, start with how to kick some serious ass in the superlative dungeon crawler, *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*.

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance PS2
(SLES 50672)

Q: Having trouble getting through the game? Here is a way to give yourself a super character!
A: During game play, Hold L2 + L1 + ← + Ⓐ then press R3.

Q: How do I unlock Gauntlet mode?
A: You are required to complete the game under any difficulty setting.

Q: How do I unlock Extreme mode?
A: You are required to complete the Gauntlet mode to unlock the extreme mode.

State of Emergency PS2
(SLES 50606)

Enter these cheats while playing the game (no need to pause):

Invulnerable
L1 L2 L1 L2 ⓧ

Infinite Ammo
L1 L2 L1 L2 Ⓐ Ⓑ You can't be holding a weapon though.

Looting on the rise
Press Start to pause game play, then press
L1 L2 L2 Ⓐ L1 L1 L2 L2 Ⓐ

8 Pain Killer Pills
Press Start to pause game play, then press o
L2 L2 L1 Ⓐ Ⓞ ⓧ Ⓑ

Unlimited Bullet Time
Press Start to pause game play, then press o
L2 L1 L2 Ⓐ ⓧ ⓧ Ⓐ

Syphon Filter 3 PSone
(SLES 03697)

Q: How do I unlock the Military Base level in Minigames?
A: You are required to rescue the hostage in Level 1: Hotel Fukashima, by simply headshot Shi-Hao, then wait for the uniformed man to run over, taking him out before he manages to waste the hostage.

Q: Why can't I play in Super Agent?
A: You have to complete the whole game! Save and it's all yours. This will give you one hit kills with all you guns, it even goes straight through Flak jackets.

Q: How do I unlock the Mesa Verde level in Minigames?
A: You have to successfully complete Level 17: Underground Bunker within 15 minutes. Note that the time limit doesn't come up, you just have to complete it within this time.

Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarding PS2
(SLES 50400)

Maximum stats:
Highlight the "Options" selection at the main menu. Then, hold L1 + Right and press Triangle(2), Circle, Triangle.

All FMV sequences:
Highlight the "Options" selection at the main menu. Then, hold L1 + ← and press
ⒶⒶ Ⓞ Ⓐ

Q: Want to know how to earn some extra trick points?
A: Try doing a flip just as you are about to enter a Snowmobile, Truck or Lift - you will always receive the points. This is extremely useful when using a jump to grab some air, ramping up the points and landing within the circle.

Q: How do I build up enough speed to jump the lake in the first level?
A: You don't need to actually jump it. Just perform a nose grind on top of the water! To complete the move, just move the Analog stick Up, then Down while you are in the air.

Head Hunter PS2
(SLES 50500)

Q: How do defeat Ramirez and his spiders in the bank.
A: Try taking control of his spiders, try shooting them once (twice kills them).

Q: I'm having trouble disarming all the bombs, sometimes when I get to the location on the map that is marked with a bomb I can't find the bomb anywhere.
A: Remember that for many locations on the map there are to possile locations. For instance a road under another road.

Jak & Daxter PS2
(SLES 50361)

Q: Having trouble finding the Dark Eco crystals in the Spider Cave?
A: Try having a closer look in & around the "Dark Cave".

Tony Hawk 3 PSone
(SLES 03645)

Special always available
Press Start to pause game play, then hold L1 and press Ⓐ → ↑ Ⓑ Ⓐ → ↑ Ⓑ Ⓐ. The pause menu will shake to confirm correct code entry.

Turbo mode
Press Start to pause game play, then hold L1 and press ← ↑ Ⓑ Ⓐ. The pause menu will shake to confirm correct code entry.

Extra points
Press Start to pause game play, then hold L1 and press Ⓑ Ⓞ → Ⓑ Ⓞ → Ⓑ Ⓞ → The level will end with 10,000 points added to your score.

Q: I can't get the secret Board on the Los Angeles level, what am I doing wrong?
A: Head over to where the walls attached to the electric rail, there is a kicker here. Launch off it to reach the telephone pole wires. Grinding down them, then jump onto the quarterpipe in the corner of the wall. Get some serious air in the middle of the quarterpipe to jump high enough to reach the deck.

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Calls charged at a rate of $0.35 (GST inclusive) with a mobile call cost system. Calls from mobile phones charged at a higher rate

086 PlayStation.2

Max Payne PS2
(SLES 50325)

Q: I am stuck in the level Family Troubles and can t find where to go.
A: If you look around you may notice a sign that states that vehicles have to have something under their back wheels to stop them spinning. Try and find a way to remove the chock under the back wheels of a bigger vehicle.

Q: I am up to Pain and Suffering and I have shot the 2 wires but the tower doesn't fall down.
A: Try Shooting at the tower until it falls down.

Unlimited health
Press 🔲 to pause game play, then press 🔲🔲 🔲🔲 🔲🔲 🔲🔲 Note: This code may need to be re-enabled after an auto-save. No life will be reduced when you are shot. This will only work from Subway A1 and onwards.

Sunny Garcia Surfing PS2
(SLES 50533)

Q: I am having trouble getting up on every wave.
A: Try getting up right as you reach the lip of the wave.

Hold 🔲 + 🔲 at the main menu for these cheats

Unlock all Boards
← ◎ ↑ ↓ ◎ ← ↓ ◎ ⊗

Unlock all Surfers/Costumes
← ◎ ↑ → ◎ ← ←

Space Channel 5 PS2
(SLES 50611)

Hard mode
Finish game then load any level to get Hard mode

Get Purple Fire Special Edition Ulala
Get a rank of 95% or higher to play as Ulala with purple fire

Find Michael Jackson
In the last level of the game you will be able to find Michael Jackson

Devil May Cry PS2
(SLES 50358)

Q: I can't kill the dragon that spits fireballs at me.
A: Try and find a way to knock his fireballs back at him (hint: that sword on your back looks pretty strong).

Half-Life PS2
(SLES 50504)

Q: Having trouble killing the Nihilanth?
A: First, make sure you have destroyed the 3 orange crystals on the wall. This prevents it from regenerating. Then, shoot it in the stomach until it opens up its' mouth. Now, just drop explosives / grenades into its' mouth.

Unlock Slow Motion Mode
Go to the Cheat Code screen in the Options menu and enter the following cheat to unlock Slow Motion Mode →
⊚ ↑ ④ → ⊚ ↑ ④ Press 🔲 to confirm code. If done correctly, the code will appear in the box to the right.

Unlock Xen Gravity
Go to the Cheat Code screen in the Options menu and enter the following cheat to unlock Xen Gravity ↑ ④ ↓ ⊗ ↑ ④ ↓ ⊗ Press 🔲 to confirm code. If done correctly, the code will appear in the box to the right.

Parappa the Rapper 2 PS2
(SLES 50408)

Q: How do I unlock the Dog House?
A: After completing the game once, you will receive a Blue Hat, completing it a second time will give you a Pink

Ace Combat 4: Distant Thunder PS2
(SLES 50410)

Q: How do I unlock the X-02 Stealth Plane?
A: Playing in the Normal Mode, you need to accomplish a 'S' Rating in all 18 Missions.

Q: And what about the other two?
A: You need to accomplish the same Rating on Hard Mode to get the Black one, then Expert Mode to get the Silver one.

Q: How do I unlock the Tiger Striped F-4E?
A: After completing the game on any difficulty, use the Special Continue option to get it.

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CHEAT CODES

Direct from the, er, horse's mouth, comes tips for one of this summer's smash hit sporting titles, *Cricket 2002*. So get cracking with the willow.

Cricket 2002 PS2
(SLES 50424)

Q: Having trouble unlocking the extra modes that the manual promises you?
A: Try actually playing both the batting and the bowling, rather than just auto-playing the bowling.

Cricket 2002 PS2
(SLES 50424)
Top 10

1. A few minutes in the practice nets makes a big difference. The timing of your shots could mean the difference between scoring a boundary or losing a wicket.

2. Resist the urge to use the power boost. Playing shots along the ground rules out the possibility of being caught and may still result in a 4 if placed between fielders.

3. Mix up your deliveries when bowling, a slow ball with a pace bowler or a googly with a spin bowler could provide that vital wicket. Experiment with different types of deliveries and various lines and lengths to find where your opponent is susceptible.

4. Keep an eye on the required run rate, there is nothing worse then needing 20 runs off of your final over.

5. Make use of the field editor. If your opponent is scoring runs in a particular area on a consistent basis, placing a fielder there could result in a catch or at least prevent them from scoring valuable runs.

6. Quick wickets could cause a team collapse, keep trying.

7. The run assist feature tells you when it is safe to run. If you find it difficult to judge when it is a good time to run, turning this feature on will give you a good indication on when a run is available.

8. Adjust your team line-up to suit the expected conditions. Spinners and swing bowlers are valuable on damp pitches, whereas Pace bowlers are useful on dry and hard pitches.

9. When placing the bowling cursor use slight movements with the analogue stick to position the cursor at the precise point where you want to pitch the ball.
10. When playing a 2-Player game, a little friendly sledging can go a long way.

Dropship: United Peace Force PS2

Select the 'Classified Files' option from the main menu and then enter any of the following game titles and suchlike as unlock codes to access the desired cheat effect.

Cheat	Code
Invincibility	TEAMBUDDIES
Unlimited ammo	BLASTRADIUS
Level select	KINGSLEY
Bonus level 1	KREUZLER
Bonus level 2	SHEARER
Bonus level 3	UBERDOOPER

Jeremy McGrath Supercross World PS2

Enter the following two codes on the main menu screen. If the code has worked then the bottom-left corner of the screen will flash.

Cheat	Code
Moon gravity	↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ⊡, ○, ○
Unlimited turbo	⊡, ⊡, ○, ○, ○, ○

Evil Twin PS2

Enter any of the following as codes to unlock a a few handy cheats...

Cheat	Code
Infinite lives	⊗, ⊡, △, ⊗, ○
Super shots	○, △, △, ⊡, ⊗
Rapid fire	⊡, △, ⊗, △, ○
Gun sights	○, ○, ⊗, △, ⊡
Sniper mode	⊡, ○, ⊗, △, ○

Splashdown PS2

Cheat mode
From the main menu, select Options and then press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ○, ○, ○, ○ at the Options menu to unlock the Cheat Name screen. Now simply enter one of the following case-sensitive codes before pressing the ⊗ button to go back to the Options screen and back out into the main game.

Cheat	Code
Never get knocked off	TopBird
Hard tracks with normal AI	Hobble
Maximum performance meter	PMeterGo
All courses	Passport
All characters	AllChar
All wetsuits	LaPinata
Expert AI	AllOutAI

Legends of Wrestling PS2

All wrestlers
At the main menu, press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ⊗, ⊗, ○ to unlock all of the wrestlers. Then go to the Options screen and save your game to ensure that they all remain unlocked in future bouts.

Secret characters
Complete the task indicated to unlock the corresponding wrestler on the character select screen.

Character	Task
Captain Lou Albano	Complete Career mode with a 'Hated' wrestler.
David & Michael Von Erich	Complete Career mode as Kevin Von Erich.
Dory Funk as Terry Funk.	Complete Career mode
Fritz Von Erich	Complete Career mode as Kerry Von Erich.
Ivan Koloff	Win the Versus Tournament.
Jimmy Hart	Complete Career mode with a 'Loved' wrestler
King Kong Bundy	Win the Southeast Territory in Career mode.
Mr Fuji	Win the Tag Belts in Tournament mode.
Robert Gibson & Ricky Morton	Win the Tag Tournament.
Sabu	Complete Career mode as The Sheik.

Wipeout Fusion PS2

Select 'Extras' at the main menu and then go to the Cheats menu. Enter any of the following codes here for the desired effect.

Cheat	Code
Features unlocked	⊗, △, ○, △, ○
Unlimited weapons	△, ○, ⊗, ○, ⊡
Unlimited shields	△, △, ○, ○, ⊡
Retro ships	⊗, ○, △, ⊡, ⊗
Animal ships	△, ○, ○, △, ⊗
Fast ships	⊡, ⊗, ⊗, ⊗, △

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the shortlist

Want the definitive verdicts on the PS2 games available right now? Then welcome to The ShortList.

OPS2 AWARDS

To filter out the pearls from the swine, *OPS2* has introduced a brand new colour-coded ratings system.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA GOLD

☆ **GOLD**
Only awarded to games that score the full 10/10.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA SILVER

☆ **SILVER**
Awarded to titles that score 9/10.

PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA BRONZE

☆ **BRONZE**
Awarded to titles that score 8/10.

4X4 EVOLUTION
(Take 2/Terminal Reality)
Flash but slack off-road 4x4 racer. Fails to make a lasting impression.
Overall 05

7 BLADES
(Konami/KCEJ)
Ninja-styled adventure with a 'healthy' dose of chopsocky gameplay.
Overall 06

18 WHEELER
(Acclaim/Sega/Acclaim Cheltenham)
Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.
Overall 06

ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER
(SCEE/Namco)
Best *Ace Combat* yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions.
Overall 07

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS
(Konami/Microsoft/Ensemble Studios/KCET)
PC-style real-time strategy with great depth and longevity. Absolutely engrossing, if a touch difficult to control.
Overall 07

☆ **AIRBLADE**
(SCEE/Criterion)
Intricate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs – everything you could want hoverboarding to be.
Overall 08

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002
(Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Austin)
An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.
Overall 07

ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE
(Infogrames/Darkworks)
An undeniably scary survival horror game series, but one that fails to frighten the pants off the PS2 in this comeback.
Overall 06

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0
(SCi/Zed Two)
Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler *Wetrix*.
Overall 07

ARCTIC THUNDER
(Midway/Midway/Inland Productions)
Crude visuals, but plenty of fast and furious gameplay.
Overall 06

ARMORED CORE 2
(Ubi Soft/From Software)
Infinitely-tweakable first-person mech shooter.
Overall 07

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE
(3DO/3DO)
Dullsville helicopter game.
Overall 02

ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE
(3DO/3DO)
On-rails shooter that manages to plumb new depths of soldiering tedium.
Overall 01

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES 2
(3DO/3DO)
Another poorly realised shooter, from the series that stars little green plastic soldiers.
Overall 03

ATV OFFROAD
(SCEE/Rainbow Studios)
Quad bike stunt racer with dubious pack AI but more than enough thrills.
Overall 06

☆ **BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE**
(Interplay/Black Isle Studios)
Play *Dungeons & Dragons* in digital format. An RPG that does the PS2 great justice.
Overall 08

BASS STRIKE
(THQ/PAI Corporation Ltd)
Fishing on PS2? Yes that's right Get out in the fresh air and do it for real!
Overall 04

BATMAN VENGEANCE
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft)
Interesting action adventure, but just a little too 'on rails' to provide a real challenge.
Overall 06

BLOODY ROAR 3
(Virgin/Hudsonsoft)
Fur Fighters meets *WWF* in this beastly battler. A lot of fur, but not quite enough bite.
Overall 06

☆ **BURNOUT**
(Acclaim/Criterion Studios)
OutRun grows up, and learns how to crash properly. Thrilling, edgy race action that will threaten your no claims bonus.
Overall 08

☆ **CAPCOM VS SNK 2**
(Capcom Eurosoft/Capcom)
A superb 2D beat-'em-up from the house that knows all there is to know about combat. With endless two-player fun.
Overall 08

CART FURY CHAMPIONSHIP RACING
(Midway/Midway)
Arcade racer with crazy physics and a dose of high-speed hard shouldering.
Overall 06

CENTRE COURT: HARD HITTER
(Midas Interactive/Magical Company)
Cheap, arcade-style tennis game. Fun Multiplayer option, but not much else.
Overall 04

CITY CRISIS
(Take 2/Syscom)
Innovative helicopter adventure with neat control system and beautiful landscapes.
Overall 06

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTEX
(Vivendi Universal/Traveller's Tales)
Crash spins onto PS2 but little has changed from PSone.
Overall 06

☆ **CRAZY TAXI**
(Acclaim/Sega/Acclaim)
Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.
Reviewed OPS2#07/**Overall 08**

☆ **CRICKET 2002**
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
The best leather-on-willow sim on any console, ever. Relax and make like it's summer.
Overall 08

DARK CLOUD
(SCEE/Level 5)
An enthralling RPG with atmospheric music and a world-building element thrown in for good measure.
Overall 07

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2
(Acclaim/Z-Axis)
Orthodox but impressive, this BMX sim has an inventive array of tricks.
Overall 07

DEAD OR ALIVE 2
(SCEE/Tecmo)
Blistering beat-'em-up that's famous for its stealthy gameplay and collection of extremely well-endowed lady fighters.
Overall 07

☆ **DEVIL MAY CRY**
(Capcom Eurosoft/Capcom)
Melding rip-roaring battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet? Definitely.
Overall 09

DISNEY'S DINOSAUR
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft)
Poor movie spin-off. Don't inflict it on the kids.
Overall 04

DNA
(Virgin Interactive/Hudsonsoft)
Gene warfare and confusing puzzles abound in this bizarre manga adventure.
Overall 06

DONALD DUCK: QUACK ATTACK
(Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive)
A first-generation platformer that suffers from Stone Age gameplay and graphics.
Overall 04

DRAGON'S LAIR
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Unplayable retro adventure. Should have stayed firmly stuck on the Laser Disc where it belonged.
Overall 02

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIMEWARP
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Painfully dull arcade sequel.
Overall 01

DRIVEN
(BAM! Entertainment/BAM! Studios Europe)
Poor racing game from a poor film licence.
Overall 04

DRIVING EMOTION TYPE-S
(EA/Square)
Dismal racer. Fails to evoke *any* emotion at all.
Overall 04

☆ **DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE**
(SCEE/Studio Camden)
Impressive combat sim that rewards involvement with paced and varied gameplay.
Overall 08

DYNASTY WARRIORS 2
(Midas Interactive/KOEI)
Epic battler mixing strategy, sword slashing, horse riding and shooting people.
Overall 07

☆ **ECCO THE DOLPHIN: DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE**
(SCEE/Sega/Appaloosa)
You're a dolphin and it's up to you to save the world from an alien invasion. Relax in the new age calm of this underwater adventure.
Overall 08

EPHEMERAL FANTASIA
(Konami/KCEJ East)
Bemani-style RPG where pulling off a guitar solo is integral to the plot.
Overall 07

☆ **ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND**
(Activision/LucasArts)
Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.
Overall 08

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD
(Konami/KCEO)
Graphically impressive athletics sim marred only by iffy AI.
Overall 06

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT
(Konami/KCEO)
Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the sin bin.
Overall 06

ESPN NBA 2NIGHT
(Konami/KCEO)
Hardcore gameplay makes this one for basketball heads only.
Overall 06

ESPN X GAMES SKATEBOARDING
(Konami/KCEO)
Not-very-extreme skateboarding sim with some unsightly graphical glitches. You're best off sticking with *Tony Hawk's*.
Overall 05

ESPN WINTER X-GAMES SNOWBOARDING
(Konami/KCEO)
Lifelike snowboarder, ruined by unsightly bland graphics, unresponsive controls and a lack of excitement.
Overall 06

ETERNAL RING
(Ubi Soft/From Software)
Unoriginal Japanese RPG. As painful as its title.
Overall 03

EVERGRACE
(Ubi Soft/Crave Entertainment/From Software)
An ultimately depressing role-playing game, that fails to engage the player at any meaningful level.
Overall 02

EVIL TWIN
(Ubi Soft/In-Utero)
Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, far-from-perfect animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.
Overall 03

EXTERMINATION
(SCEE/Deep Space)
Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.
Overall 07

☆ **EXTREME-G 3**
(Acclaim/Acclaim)
A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some 'inspiration' from the *WipEout* series. Not for the faint-hearted.
Overall 08

F1 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Another solid PlayStation 2 Formula One title, but ultimately it's a tad soulless.
Overall 07

F1 CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 2000
(EA Sports/EA/Visual Sciences)
Hardcore F1 fans will find this a little too easy.
Overall 06

F1 RACING CHAMPIONSHIP
(Video System/Ubi Soft)
Good attention to detail but a lot less fun than its (many) competitors.
Overall 05

FANTAVISION
(SCEE/SCEI)
The world's first fireworks game. Not enormous, but of rare and random beauty.
Overall 07

FIFA 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
Great graphics, but Second Division gameplay.
Overall 06

FIFA 2002
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
Despite admirable improvements, this is still a goal down to *Pro Evolution*.
Overall 07

☆ **FORMULA ONE 2001**
(SCEE/Studio Liverpool)
Still the best F1 game to reach the PS2 yet. All the drivers, tracks and cars included. Load it up and feel the speed.
Overall 08

six of the best

SECOND HAND STARS

1. SMUGGLERS RUN
This deleriously enjoyable contraband and cops game plays like a particularly insane episode of *Dukes Of Hazzard* with all four wheels off the ground. Hugely fun in Single-Player mode this game gets even better with a MultiTap and mates.
Smuggler's Run is out now from Rockstar Games

2. MADDEN NFL 2001
The gridiron choice for virtual sports fans everywhere *Madden* is extremely playable. As complete as you'll ever need, all that's aged are the team rosters.
Madden NFL 2001 is out now from EA Sports

3. SSX
The daddy of extreme snowboarders can still cut it on the slopes. Far from being just a quality launch title *SSX* is better than a large number of PS2 games out there a year on. *SSX is out now from EA Sports Big*

4. TIMESPLITTERS
Superlative FPS that boasts invention and pyrotechnic mayhem in equal measures. The Multiplayer modes are the main draw, but the single-player story is cracking fun too.
TimeSplitters is out now from Eidos

5. TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
For now this still packs more punch than any other PS2 beat-'em-up. Great to look at and difficult to master, this is a must for hardcore fight fans.
Tekken Tag Tournament is out now from SCEE

6. SHADOW OF MEMORIES
This time-shifting whodunnit adventure replaces gory horror with an unsettling atmosphere and a serpentine plot. A slow burning gem.
Shadow Of Memories is out now from Konami

FREAK OUT
(Swing!/Treasure)
Unique cartoon action-adventure with a kooky Japanese twist. Grab enemies with a bewitched scarf.
Overall 07

⭐ **FUR FIGHTERS**
(Acclaim/Bizarre Creations)
Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotguns blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.
Overall 08

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY
(Midway/Midway East Games)
A linear RPG that unfortunately comes off as a pale imitation of it's coin-op ancestor.
Overall 05

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO
(Interplay/Planet Moon)
The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.
Overall 06

GIFT
(Cryo Interactive/Ekosystem)
New take on the 3D platformer, but lets its French imagination get in the way of its gameplay.
Overall 06

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA
(Rage/Rage Warrington)
An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.
Overall 07

GRADIUS III & IV
(Konami/KCET)
Dull 2D arcade shooter. More PSone than next-gen.
Overall 02

⭐ **GRAND THEFT AUTO III**
(Rockstar Games/ DMA Design)
The original crim sim goes 3D. The game has its flaws, but there's nothing else quite as sick, inventive and funny on the shelves. Buy it.
Overall 08

⭐ **GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC**
(SCEE/Polyphony Digital)
If you didn't know already, *GT3* is the greatest driving game in the world. Buy it now.
Overall 09

G-SURFERS
(Midas Interactive/ Blade Interactive)
Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.
Overall 07

⭐ **GUILTY GEAR X**
(Virgin/Sammy)
Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.
Overall 08

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE
(Swing!/GameArts)
A mech shooter for robot obsessives everywhere.
Overall 07

H30 SURFING
(Take 2/ASCII)
Inadequate surf sim, although the water's well realised.
Overall 04

⭐ **HALF-LIFE**
(Vivendi Universal/ Valve/Gearbox)
The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in resplendent form. An essential purchase.
Overall 09

HEADHUNTER
(SCEE/Amuze)
Dirty Harry meets *MGS2* in a world where the law is controlled by bounty hunters. There's a great game here somewhere, but we only got glimpses of it.
Overall 07

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
(3DO/3DO)
Patchy PC-style adventure.
Overall 03

HOLOGRAM TIME TRAVELLER
(Digital Leisure/Sega)
It may be called a 'classic' but avoid this like the plague.
Overall 00

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE SOCCER
(Eon Digital Entertainment/Taito)
Easily one of the worst footy sims ever to grace the PS2.
Overall 02

⭐ **INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER**
(Konami/KCEO)
Genuine squads and more instant terrace gratification take *ISS* up to the PS2 level.
Overall 08

⭐ **JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY**
(SCEE/Naughty Dog)
A brilliant platformer from the makers of *Crash Bandicoot* introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.
Overall 09

⭐ **JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE**
(EA/EA Redwood Shores)
A thrilling single-player Bond experience, with a great Four-Player mode and beautiful leading ladies. Almost on a par with N64's *GoldenEye*.
Overall 08

JEREMY McGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD
(Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Salt Lake)
A motocross game that's just like the real thing (minus the realism, thrills, speed, gritty handling and mud).
Overall 03

JET SKI RIDERS
(Eidos/Opus Corporation)
Great water effects and Kawasaki-licensed Jet Skis. Shame about the average racing, though.
Overall 06

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO
(Ubi Soft/LightWeight)
A padded-out Training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighter's otherwise rather limited nature.
/**Overall 06**

KESSEN
(Electronic Arts/KOEI)
A real-time strategy game set in feudal Japan, where you get to command a huge army. Initially confusing, potentially enthralling.
Overall 07

⭐ **KLONOA 2: LUNATEA'S VEIL**
(SCEE/Namco)
Cute and cheerful platformer featuring the lovable glove-eared blue cat-rabbit hybrid.
Overall 08

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not good enough to earn its royal status, though.
Overall 06

KURI KURI MIX
(Empire/From Software)
A blend of two-player co-operation and cutesy platformer. An odd but worthwhile addition to any PS2 collection.
Overall 07

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING
(Acclaim/Acclaim)
'Violent ballet' with a shortage of modes and options. Fine recreation of Pro wrestling.
Overall 05

LEGO RACERS 2
(Lego Software/ATD)
It's a Lego racer. Build cars and characters (using virtual Lego), then race them. Very average – give us more bricks!
Overall 05

⭐ **LE MANS 24 HOURS**
(Infogrames/ Melbourne House)
Accessible for the gamer who's daunted by ultra-accurate sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills in abundance.
Overall 08

LOTUS CHALLENGE
(Virgin Interactive/Kuju)
With a whole back catalogue of branded cars, it's a Lotus fan's dream. It's just a shame their speed isn't conveyed.
Overall 05

⭐ **MADDEN NFL 2001**
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
A rewarding and complete NFL game. Could convert non-believers to the sport.
Overall 08

MADDEN NFL 2002
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Exemplary American football title with a pristine pedigree. Virtually faultless, aside from being just another yearly update of a franchise. Go buy!
Overall 09

MAGIX MUSIC MAKER
(Fast Trak/Magix)
Music creation game with loads of sounds and a freaky Video Editing mode. Crisp samples, professional sound, but not enough scope for individual creativity.
Overall 06

⭐ **MDK2 ARMAGEDDON**
(Interplay/BioWare)
Originally a game on Dreamcast and PS, this third-person action shooter in space has lost nothing in translation. Has three playable characters and is destined to be a cult classic.
Overall 08

⭐ **METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY**
(Konami/KCEJ)
A must-own, state-of-the-art Tactical Espionage action game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, surprising story with intelligence and soul. Unbeatable sound and graphics – a benchmark for future PS2 titles.
Overall 10

MIDNIGHT CLUB
(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Speedy, urban racing, that boasts huge and action-packed New York and London environments. Sadly, the gameplay ain't that great.
Overall 04

MODERNGROOVE: MINISTRY OF SOUND
(Ubi Soft/Moderngroove)
An entertaining lightshow generator, containing five full dance albums.
Overall 06

MONSTERS, INC
(SCEE/Disney Interactive)
Disney Platform game, based on the film. Initially amusing but sloppy and basic with a life span of no more than a few hours, though the film clips are entertaining.
Overall 06

MOTO GP
(SCEE/Namco)
Gran Turismo on two wheels? Ish. A fantastic motorbike sim that rewards repeated play.
Overall 07

MOTO GP 2
(3DO/3DO)
A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race replay facility.
Overall 07

MOTOR MAYHEM
(Infogrames/Beyond Games)
Unoriginal deathmatch-based vehicle blasting.
Overall 05

⭐ **MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 2**
(Codemasters/Jester)
Home DJ sample/mixer music maker. It's enormous fun and nigh-on faultless. This is exciting and well put together – pick it up and start making your own choons!
Overall 09

the shortlist

Want the definitive verdicts on the PS2 games available right now? Then welcome to The ShortList.

MX 2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL
(THQ/Pacific Coast Power)
Polished and engaging motorcross sim that utilises its subject matter to great effect.
Overall 07

MX RIDER
(Infogrames/Paradigm)
Motocross/supercross sim that lacks the true grittiness and excitement of the sport.
Overall 06

NBA HOOPZ
(Midway/Eurocom)
Instant arcade-styled basketball sim but there are better ones on the street.
Overall 06

NBA LIVE 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
Solid and playable. Thrills are thin on the ground, though.
Overall 06

NBA LIVE 2002
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
An update of NBA Live 2001? Only for true basketball nuts.
Overall 06

NBA STREET
(EA Sports Big/EA Sports)
Great looks, great to play, but not what most will want. There's room for improvement.
Overall 06

☆ NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB
(Acclaim/Acclaim Studios Austin)
American football game that has unique features, but unable to compete with Madden 2002.
Overall 08

☆ NHL 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
EA Sports' perennial ice hockey licence that hits the mark. As JamieOliver might say, "Pucka!"
Overall 08

☆ NHL 2002
(EA Sports/EA Sports Canada)
The definitive ice hockey videogame, and a marked improvement on NHL 2001.
Overall 08

NHL HITZ 2002
(Midway/Black Box)
A satisfying, if short-lived, arcade-style ice hockey game.
Overall 06

NY RACE
(Wanadoo/Kalisto)
Average future taxi racer, based on the opening sequence of Luc Besson's sci-fi epic The Fifth Element. Nothing Crazy to see here.
Overall 05

ONI
(Rockstar/Bungie Software)
New character animation in an enjoyable third-person sci-fi romp.
Overall 07

☆ ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS
(Capcom/Capcom)
Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though.
Reviewed OPS2#09/Overall 08

OPERATION WINBACK
(Midas Interactive/KOEI)
Lacks variety, but still manages to be an enjoyable stealth shooter, nevertheless.
Overall 06

ORPHEN
(Activision/Shade Inc)
Disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG.
Overall 04

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2
(SCEE/NanaOn-sha)
Rhythm action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.
Overall 07

PARIS-DAKAR RALLY
(Acclaim/Broadsword Interactive)
Based on the race of the same name, this sim does little to inspire interest.
Reviewed OPS2#13/Overall 05

PENNY RACERS
(Midas/Takara)
A half-baked and underfed GT3, with just a few good tracks to recommend it.
Overall 04

POLAROID PETE
(JVC/Irem)
Coated in Japanese weirdness, this side-scrolling photo sim is a definite cult hit.
Overall 07

POLICE 24/7
(Konami/KCET)
Basic cop-shot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-'em-up.
Reviewed OPS2#17/Overall 05

POOLMASTER
(Take 2/Ask)
Dull pool sim, despite some tidy ball physics.
Overall 05

PORTAL RUNNER
(3DO/3DO)
Vikki, of Army Men notoriety, gets her own title. It's the best of a bad bunch.
Reviewed OPS2#13/Overall 05

☆ PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER
(Konami/Konami TYO)
Konami TYO updates ISS Pro Evolution and creates the best PS2 football sim yet.
Overall 09

☆ PROJECT EDEN
(Eidos/Core Design)
Look beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose weeks to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure.
Overall 08

☆ QUAKE III
(EA/id & Bullfrog)
In four-player, this FPS is the best multiplayer yet. A technical tour de force, it runs like greased lightning and looks absolutely gorgeous.
Overall 09

RAYMAN M
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Studios France)
Based primarily on multiplayer action. Some good ideas, but the gameplay is nothing new.
Overall 06

☆ RAYMAN REVOLUTION
(Ubi Soft/Ubi Soft)
Animation-quality graphics elevate this classic platformer starring a disjointed hero. A title worthy of PS2.
Overall 08

RC REVENGE PRO
(Acclaim/Acclaim Cheltenham)
A distinct lack of any discemable speed makes this an avoidable kart racer.
Overall 03

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
(Midway/Midway)
A marvellous, arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other.
Overall 07

☆ RED FACTION
(THQ/Volition)
Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Quake III. Marred only by some average level design.
Overall 08

☆ RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X
(Capcom Eurosoft/Capcom)
A captivating story, cinematic atmosphere, kinetic action, frights, thrills and copious amounts of blood-letting. Give in to its disgustingly depraved clutches. You know you want to.
Overall 09

☆ REZ
(SCEE/Sega (UGA))
Fight computer viruses from within the system. Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay.
Overall 09

RIDGE RACER V
(SCEE/Namco)
A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality.
Overall 07

☆ RING OF RED
(Konami/KCE?)
A mech RTS that's fun? Oh yes. A must-buy for the discerning robo-fetishist after something different.
Overall 08

ROBOT WARLORDS
(Midas Interactive/DaZZ)
Many other superior mech games make this redundant in a somewhat minority genre in the UK.
Overall 04

ROBOT WARS
(BBC Multimedia/Climax)
TV show tie-ins rarely work. This could have been a whole lot better. Stick to watching the real 'bot battles instead.
Overall 05

RUGBY
(EA Sports/Creative Assembly)
So far the only PS2 game to represent this sport. More akin to Madden than FIFA in approach, a highly enjoyable and refined take on the sport. EA Sports does it again.
Overall 08

☆ RUMBLE RACING
(EA/EA)
Fast and furious arcade stunt racer that has tons of challenge and replay value, especially in Two-Player mode. Full of totally insane courses to put you though you paces.
Overall 08

RUNE: VIKING WARLORD
(Take 2/Human Head)
A Viking slash-'em-up that should have been confined to the Dark Ages.
Overall 04

SALT LAKE 2002
(Eidos/Attention To Detail)
Well-presented Winter Olympics game. Decent weather effects and well-defined athletes, but the majority of events are rather tedious. Not much variety and a limited life span.
Overall 05

☆ SHADOW OF MEMORIES
(Konami/KCET)
Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot.
Overall 08

SHAUN PALMER'S PRO SNOWBOARDER
(Activision/Dearsoft)
Basically Tony Hawk's on snow. It's an exhilarating sport, but the gameplay is unimaginative and the controls sluggish.
Overall 06

☆ SILENT HILL 2
(Konami/KCET Team Silent)
One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one relentless videogame.
Overall 08

☆ SILENT SCOPE
(Konami/KCEO)
Slick but simple shooting gallery-style game where you play a police sniper. A great launch title that we're still playing.
Reviewed OPS2#01/Overall 08

SILENT SCOPE 2
(Konami/Konami TYO)
A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.
Overall 07

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET
(Swing!/Treasure/GameArts)
Tedious top-down shooter, that shouldn't be on PS2.
Overall 03

SIR ALEX FERGUSON'S PLAYER MANAGER 2002
(3DO/Anco)
Adept footy management sim, but lacks the killer goal.
Overall 06

☆ SKY ODYSSEY
(SCEE/Cross for SCEI)
A flight sim where – somewhat unusually – you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.
Overall 08

SKY SURFER
(Virgin Interactive/Idea Factory)
Whoever thought that jumping out of a plane attached to a board would make a good game should be shot.
Overall 03

SMUGGLER'S RUN
(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Mission-based fun in which you escape from the cops with a trunkload of booty. Impressive free-roaming environments.
Overall 07

SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES
(Rockstar/Angel Studios)
Impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.
Overall 07

SOUL REAVER 2
(Eidos Interactive/Crystal Dynamics)
Soul-sucking fantasy adventure that revolves around the exploits of Raziel and his huge Soul Reaver sword.
Overall 07

SPACE ACE
(Digital Leisure/Cinematronics)
Horrific and ancient arcade port. The original was cool. This isn't.
Overall 01

SPACE RACE
(3DO/3DO)
The cartoon Kart racer in its simplest form. Lacks originality and is a poor Mario Kart rip-off.
Overall 05

SPLASHDOWN
(Infogrames/Rainbow Studios)
Above-average Sea-Doo racer, with impressive water effects. The racing is sluggish, though.
Overall 07

☆ SPY HUNTER
(Midway/Paradigm)
Pretend you're James Bond. Captures the spirit of the original game and adds further shiny next-gen knobs.
Overall 08

☆ SSX
(EA Sports Big/EA Sports Canada)
Inventive rainbow-coloured high-speed snowboard game packed with crazy courses, and crazier characters.
Overall 09

☆ SSX TRICKY
(EA Sports Big/EA Sports Canada)
The sequel to the PS2's sleeper hit is now bigger and better. New courses included!
Overall 09

glossary

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the lastest and most up-to-date information? But don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been round since the ZX Spectrum by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.
AI: Artificial Intelligence.
Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.
Boarders: Snowboarders or games featuring the alpine sport.
Coin-op: Coin-operated arcade videogames.
Cut-scene: Explanatory, non playable scene in videogame (also 'FMV').
CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.
Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.
D-pad: Direction pad on

PS2 controller.
Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.
Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).
ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.
E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).
Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.
FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg Quake III).
Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.
High res: High

resolution (graphics).
HUD: Head Up Display. Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc.
Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc.
Low res: Refers to poor qulaity graphics.
L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.
Mini-games: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.
Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.
PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.

Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.
RPG: Role-playing game
RTS: Real-time strategy
R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.
Sim: Simulation.
Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.
USB: Port to connect peripherals such as keyboard to PS2.

☐ If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taxing your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here.

database

Can't get hold of one of the games in The ShortList? Something gone wrong? Need to check a release date? Here's the definitive list of all Aussie PS2 publishers.

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER
(Activision/LucasArts)
Mesmerising 3D *Star Wars* blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects.
Overall 09

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING
(Activision/Lucas Learning)
Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.
Overall 05

STREET FIGHTER EX3
(Capcom Eurosoft/Arika)
A decent enough cult 2D/3D battler. Has its devout fans.
Overall 06

STUNT GP
(Virgin Interactive/Team 17)
Practice car stunts with remote-controlled cars. A good idea that's sadly rather poorly realised.
Overall 05

SUMMONER
(THQ/Volition)
Although confined to strict RPG plot confines, this is an entertaining spectacle with expert storytelling.
Overall 08

SUPER BUST-A-MOVE
(Acclaim/Taito)
Another update of a classic game, but a pointless one as it adds nothing original to the timeless gameplay.
Overall 04

SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE
(Activision/Exakt)
A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.
Overall 04

SWING AWAY GOLF
(EA Sports/T&E Soft)
Cutesy PSone golf sim that's let down by a poor PS2 conversion.
Overall 03

TARZAN FREERIDE
(Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive)
Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work.
Overall 04

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT
(SCEE/Namco)
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves should keep the *Tekken* faithful happy until the next 'proper' instalment reaches the shelves. Meanwhile, keep your eyes peeled for *Tekken 4*.
Overall 09

TEST DRIVE: OFFROAD WIDE OPEN
(Infogrames/Angel Studios)
A tidy but limited offroad racer, from the makers of *Smuggler's Run*.
Overall 06

TG DARE DEVIL
(Kemco/Papaya Studios)
Mission-based retro car racer that fails to provide innovation or excitement.
Overall 05

THE BOUNCER
(SCEE/Squaresoft)
A fun, accessible brawler whose adventuring elements are fairly limited.
Overall 06

THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS
(Swing! Entertainment/Toka)
Stone Age karting action based on the titular film licence. Yabba dabba… Actually, don't. Ever.
Overall 02

THE MUMMY RETURNS
(Vivendi Universal/Blitz Games)
Sub-standard, adventure-based movie tie-in. You're better sticking to the more reliable *Tomb Raider* collection.
Overall 05

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE
(EA/Radical Entertainment)
It's *Crazy Taxi* but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.
Overall 06

THE WEAKEST LINK
(Activision/Activision)
You'll get more enjoyment playing along with the TV show than you will from putting up with the viper-tongued Anne Robinson. Witch.
Overall 04

THEME PARK WORLD
(EA/Bullfrog)
Take on the role of a theme park tycoon for a day in this engaging god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those turnstiles a-spinnin' is your prime directive.
Overall 07

THIS IS FOOTBALL 2002
(SCEE/Team SoHo)
An atmospheric and playable addition to a revived series.
Overall 07

THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX
(Eidos/Core Design)
A brave attempt to blend arcade and sim with choppers.
Overall 07

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2001
(EA Sports/EA Sports)
Authentic golf sim, a tad undermined by a random control system.
Overall 06

TIME CRISIS 2
(SCEE/Namco)
PS2's first on-rails light gun title sets the standard for others to follow. Has a great Two-player co-op mode.
Overall 08

TIMESPLITTERS
(Eidos/Free Radical Design)
Fun, fast, frantic and inventive first-person shooter. Buy it for the addictive split-screen multiplayer madness.
Overall 09

TOKYO XTREME RACER
(Crave/Ubi Soft/Genki)
Sedate, and thus dull, racer.
Overall 04

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
(Activision/Neversoft)
Fantastic skate sim that's perfect to play whether you've got two minutes or two hours to spare. Notable for being the first PAL game to have online network play, too.
Overall 09

TOP GUN
(Virgin Interactive/Digital Integrations)
A flight sim that seems to have been designed by people who have never even seen a plane. A few arcade thrills.
Overall 04

TWISTED METAL: BLACK
(SCEE/Incognito)
On a post-nuclear-war planet, it's time to drive around in frenzied vehicle-based hedonism. This is everything that you'd expect a *Twisted Metal* game to be on PS2 – and then some.
Overall 08

UEFA CHALLENGE
(Infogrames/Infogrames)
Everything that could go wrong in a football game, handily compiled in a single title.
Overall 02

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 2001/2002
(Take 2/Silicon Dreams)
The balance of play and fluid animation isn't defined enough in this footy game.
Overall 07

UNREAL TOURNAMENT
(Infogrames/Epic Games)
A satisfyingly gory, totally over-the-top and immensely playable first-person shooter.
Overall 08

VICTORIOUS BOXERS
(Empire Interactive/ESP)
Offbeat, story-based Japanese boxing title that sadly lacks the killer punch.
Overall 04

WACKY RACES STARRING DASTARDLY AND MUTTLEY
(Infogrames/Infogrames)
Misty-eyed fans of the TV series will love the visuals. A shame the game isn't all that great.
Overall 06

WALT DISNEY'S JUNGLE BOOK GROOVE PARTY
(Ubi Soft/Disney Interactive)
The game guaranteed to get you dancing round your living room like a loon.
Overall 04

WARRIORS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
(3DO/3DO)
Dreadful non-adventure/RPG with nothing to recommend it.
Overall 03

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? 2ND EDITION
(Eidos/Revolution)
Scary animation of Tarrant and easy questions make this a chore. That *is* our final answer.
Overall 04

WILD WILD RACING
(Rage/Rage)
Off-road buggy-racing game with initially discouraging handling. Stick with it, though, and the Stunt mode can become quite addictive.
Overall 06

WIPEOUT FUSION
(SCEE/Studio Liverpool)
Style and substance are here in the most fully realised *WipEout* yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it gets. With a cracking soundtrack.
Overall 09

WOODY WOODPECKER: ESCAPE FROM BUZZ BUZZARD'S PARK
(3DO/3DO)
Unoriginal Platform adventure with a friendly cartoon look and solid, brightly coloured graphics.
Overall 03

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2002
(Codemasters/Blade)
Extremely playable snooker sim that may convert sceptics. Take part in the all-star tournament playing as Hendry or Doherty. Incredibly playable.
Overall 08

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: THUNDER TANKS
(3DO/3DO)
Arcade tank sim that's brilliant in Four-Player Deathmatch mode. Lacks lasting appeal in One-Player mode, though.
Overall 07

WORLD DESTRUCTION LEAGUE: WARJETZ
(3DO/3DO)
Plane-based future war battles. Looks like an average PSone game, though.
Overall 02

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
(SCEE/Evolution Studios)
The most realistic rally experience ever committed to a videogame. This is a pristine example of next-generation programming that no self-respecting gamer should be without.
Overall 09

WWF SMACKDOWN! 'JUST BRING IT!'
(THQ/Yuke's)
Step into the spandex pants of The Rock and chums. This is without a doubt the most realistic representation of the WWF experience on a console yet. Top stuff.
Overall 08

X-SQUAD
(EA/EA Square)
A tedious team-based third-person shooter.
Overall 05

ZONE OF THE ENDERS
(Konami/KCEJ)
Cool mech thriller from *Metal Gear*'s Hideo Kojima, with bonus *MGS2* demo just to get you in the mood.
Overall 09

Trust is the key.

WORDS: PETER JANKULOVSKI

Tony Hawk

The man hardly needs an introduction, becoming virtually a household name in the unprecedented leap from real life into videogaming. OPS2 catches up with Tony Hawk.

"I was excited to work on a game because I'd always been into video games"

The Hawk shares our passion

Look Ma, no gravity!

Fans of the sport consider him a living legend. For the uninitiated, his hard work and dedication has made him a household name in the world sport scene, compared with the likes of Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods. PlayStation2 owners were recently treated to one of the most acclaimed video games to be released on the console, bearing his name. And he's a nice guy to boot.

Tony Hawk enjoys an almost mythic status on the skateboarding scene, if his recent visit to Melbourne for the Globe World Cup Skateboarding Championships was any indicator. While he did not compete, his legion of fans were there in droves to witness an exhibition of his gravity-defying moves on the half-pipe, many of which would have been considered impossible only a few years ago, had he not invented them.

"I never set any specific goals for myself", explains Tony, "except for tricks, so there are still tricks I want to learn. As far as skating and videogames go it's been a blast, how popular everything has gotten. But at the same time, my focus is skating, I just wanna get out there and ride, like tonight. Everything else is sort of incidental and has been a blast. But I don't want to lose sight of why I'm here, and, so, I just continue to skate."

While these days he manages his extremely successful Birdhouse skate brand and has a slew of sponsorship arrangements, Tony has not lost sight of his humble beginnings in a sport which was recognised as little more as some alternative, rebellious event all those years ago.

"You didn't even earn a living when I started as a pro. I turned pro in, lets see, it was 1983-84, and a pro contest first place was $150, and those were few and far between. And I got monthly royalty checks, for like $4. So it wasn't a career choice, it was just a title you held. But I had reached the top of the amateur circuit and the progression was to turn pro. I didn't care, I was just happy that I got to keep skating, and that I actually had a sponsor, coz all the skate companies were going out of business. It wasn't a career choice, like it could be now. If someone decided to turn pro, they're going to make an income. But I

was only 14. I had a paper route…"

Tony Hawk has been instrumental in many other areas aimed at increasing the profile of his chosen profession. His return to the community has been invaluable in nurturing new talent and giving back to the sport that has made him a legendary household name.

"I started a foundation, Tony Hawk Foundation, actually, that's why I'm down here. Globe, Hardcore and Activision have donated money to the foundation, as an appearance fee. That's where my appearance fees go and the foundation gives grants to start public skate parks in underprivileged areas.."

As if he hasn't done enough to bring the world of skateboarding to the masses through the success of the video games, his other plans are just as likely to continue to increase the popularity of skateboarding in the mainstream, as an ambitious Tony Hawk describes:

"The only thing that I really have been working on that I feel like would be fun and would bring our type of skating to bigger audiences is to bring an arena-style tour, where we bring in our own ramps, and its like, its not a competition, it's like a stunt show basically."

Of course, it's Tony Hawk the video gamer who's captured the imagination of an unsuspecting public. Being a gamer at heart, Tony attributes a lot of his rise to fame, to his involvement with the Pro-Skater games published by Activision.

"I was excited to work on a game, because I'd always been into video games, and any game that involves skateboarding. I used to play 720 for hours, and I bought a Commodore 64 because Skate or Die was available for it. When I got the opportunity to work on a game, I was just excited to get something out there that had the right direction. They got skaters involved in early stages of the game, whereas the other ones were just kind of more eccentric, more cheesy as far as what the goals were. I just figured skaters would enjoy it and that would be the end of it. But it took off way beyond anything I'd ever expected."

Tony Hawk's involvement with the video games delves much further then lending his name and image to the cover. In fact, his game development knowledge is second to none, and his

continual involvement in the development process can be attributed to almost every feature that has made the game series as successful as they have become.

"When we start the process, I get the builds", describes Tony. "Neversoft usually puts up a build on FTP and I download it every 2 weeks or so, and play it and make suggestions, just basically like a beta tester [laughs]… But also along the lines of trying to get new places, new tricks involved. There's a lot of work behind them, and there's a lot of technical things that skaters really see… Neversoft, they put their heart into it and half of them are skaters now, so it's a lot easier to deal with."

Riding high on the success of the games, Activision has already announced the inevitable follow-up in this immensely successful series. Not surprisingly though, given the nature of the video games industry, Tony is careful not to give too much away when quizzed on the highly anticipated 4th game in the series, due out for the PS2 and other platforms the first half of 2003.

"We're working on it, yeah. We want to get the motion a little cleaner so… Kinda taking a couple of steps back, but it's gonna be worth it. And we've got some ideas for spots and different style of gameplay, but along the same lines of what it has been. We don't just wanna make it like a whole new set of levels and goals, but make it more interesting."

Even with all the success on and off the skate park that he has achieved over his colourful career, Tony Hawk still remains as much down-to-earth and approachable as the skater kid living next door. In fact, he almost appears surprised and shocked by what he has achieved, by simply believing in something that he is overjoyed to be able to do.

"Yeah its shocking" he admits coyly, "but its weird because I always believed in it…. it feels like it's about time people appreciated pro skating and what we're doing. Because that's what I've been living the whole time and I couldn't understand why it wasn't more recognised. But at the same time I didn't set out to make it recognised, it just sort of all evolved."

ACTiVISION 2

OLUTION

What do you mean this shirt clashes with the poster?

Even the best skaters in the world need to take a breather every now and then.

Tony doing his thang at last year's Globe event.

Tony Hawk

OPS2 cornered Tony in a quiet moment and begged him to sign a deck for a luck OPS2 reader. Read what he said and enter the compo to win!

WIN A DECK!

Thanks to Tony's *Birdhouse* , *Globe* International and our mates at *Activision*, we have some great stuff to give away. Our lucky grand prix winner will skate away with an exclusive *Birdhouse* deck signed by Tony himself!

Five runners up get a *Birdhouse* T-shirt and a copy of *Tony Hawk Pro Skater 3* for PlayStation 2!

Just complete the following sentence in 10 worlds or fewer:

Tony Hawk rocks my world because....

and email your entry to: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au

or snail mail to: P.O. Box 1037 Bondi Junction 2022

While visiting Melbourne for the Globe World Cup Skateboarding competition, The Official Australian PlayStation2 Magazine was lucky enough to catch up and chat exclusively with Tony Hawk on the recently released Tony Hawk Pro Skater 3, on his involvement in the game and the future of the series!

First of all, can you tell us a little more about your role in the development of THPS3 in terms of the tricks and combos found in the game?
I just provide as much reference material as I can, with locations and with tricks, and work closely [with the developers] to try and get the animations right. And then play it every step of the way and make suggestions as I go.

Speaking of the locations, how do you feel about the realism, compared to the actual real locations and how much input have you had with that?
Yeah, I think the locations are all very reflective of the real places, especially in the first game. Everyone recognised the spots immediately and knew what tricks had been done there, from magazines and things like that, but it's the fact that you can make your character go so much bigger that you are able to do stuff beyond what people have actually done.

Did you ever find that you had to tell the developers to hold back on certain moves, combos or features, where something wasn't realistic enough, or did it happen the other way around, perhaps?
Well, there's been a couple of times when we really wanted to do something and it just didn't work in that incarnation. Like, the first game I wanted to have a loop and we just couldn't figure out the gravity for it, but then in the second game we did it. There's been times when, usually it was for a time crunch, something wasn't going to work because they didn't have the time to get it right. But inevitably, it happens in the next game.

How do you feel about the realism depicted in the game? Do you think that they've reached a right balance between it being a simulation and being something that is over the top and more appealing to a wider spectrum of gamers?
I think so, yeah. I mean if you make it too hard, then its like skateboarding, and you might just get too frustrated with it and you don't know what you're doing. But I think that it has so many levels to it as far as degree of difficulty and building up your character that you can ride the levels as if you're really skating or you can go to that, sort of other extreme and do crazy, three-story drops.

What are some of the new features in THPS3 that you particularly like, and is there anything left out which you would have liked to have in there?
Um, not much left out. I think the best features are, well from being a vert skater, the revert feature was great, because you can go up a quarter pipe and come in back into a manual and keep doing a combination trick, which you couldn't do in the other games. And I was always riding the quarter pipes for the most part. But the other feature I really like on the PS2 is the online feature. That's a lot of fun!

Have you played it online yet, with random gamers?
Yeah, yeah, especially when it came out, I was playing it. It was fun.

Do you tell them it's the real Tony Hawk that they are playing against? Do you find that they believe you?
Um, not really because then no-one wants to play any more, they just wanna talk to me, so… [laughs] Well, a couple of times I went out and I just used my [initials]… I was always TH when I played it with Neversoft, so I would go out with my screen name as TH and then they'd be like – "Are you really him?", "Yeah….", "Well, prove it!!", and I'd say, "Well, ok, how do I prove it??" But it was fun in the beginning because I was playing with Neversoft as we were developing it and those

guys are all playing it all day long so they're all kicking my ass when we're online. But then when the game finally shipped, all these newcomers got online, and I finally got to beat some people! [laughs]

Did you ever think that the series would achieve the amount of success that they have, especially in the mainstream, away from skateboarding fans? Why do you think it's been so well received?
No, I never thought it would be that big. I think people really like the playability of it, in terms of being able to keep coming back to it. But you know, even if they finish the level there's new ways to score, there's new gaps to find and they just like the fact that you can keep it fresh. And there's not a lot of games that, once you finish them, are fun to keep playing.

How do you feel about all the other "me too" games that have come out on the market. There have been a lot of copies out there, so to speak?
Well, its great that it's finally a genre, you know, it's not like its just some fringe. And I like the fact that there are other ideas out there. I try to play them somewhat, but inevitably I just wanna play the one we know, that we've done, because I know it so well.

We know that you like video games; can you tell us what other PS2 games you play in your spare time, apart from THPS3, obviously?
Umm… Lets see… SSX Tricky… and Grand Theft Auto and, um… what was the last game I really played… gosh, I can't even remember…Oh, that ATV… yeah, that was a good game!!!

Can you tell our readers anything more about Tony Hawk 4, and what we can look forward to?
No!! I can't… [laughs] They'd kill me every time I'd say anything about the games that are coming out until they'd send the press release, so… all I can say is that its gonna have better animation.

OK, thank you for your time, Tony!

NO ONE CAN WAIT TO PLAY THE NEW SEGA GAMES ON PLAYSTATION®2.
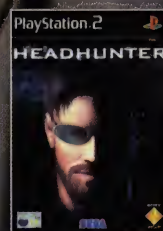
That's because Sega hits the PlayStation scene with three new titles — Headhunter, Rez, and Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future. And they're all out now, so you'll want to get your hands on them as fast as you can. Visit www.au.playstation.com/segaday for more info.

SEGA® PlayStation.2 THE THIRD PLACE